DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 143 SP 034 425

AUTHOR McMichael, Paquita; And Others
TITLE Short-Term Secondments: An Examination of the Experience of an Occupational Transition in Education.
INSTITUTION Heriot-Watt Univ., Edinburgh (Scotland). Moray House Inst. of Education.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-901580538
PUB DATE [92]
NOTE 65p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Employer Attitudes; *Employment Opportunities; Foreign Countries; Motivation; *Staff Development; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education; *Teacher Employment; Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Scotland; *Temporary Employment

ABSTRACT

This project explored the activities and attitudes of Scottish teachers (N=50) on secondment to a variety of different bodies. The term "secondment" refers to the short-term assignment of a professional person from one institution to another, involving new forms of accountability and professional commitment. Three types of secondments were investigated: secondment from school teaching to teaching in colleges of education, secondment from school or college teaching to posts in the Scottish Office Education Department or the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, and secondment from teaching posts to other kinds of work within the regional Education Authorities. The project examined the characteristics of secondees, their detachment from their previous posts, their attachment to the new posts, their subsequent detachment from secondment, and their transition to the old or a new job. It focused on motivation for secondment application, employer responses toward the secondment, expectations and experiences of the secondment, adjustment, and the process of exiting the secondment. Twenty secondees were interviewed, and all 50 teachers on secondment responded to a questionnaire inquiry. The project found that administrative arrangements were unsatisfactorily managed both by the secondment agency and by the employers to which secondees returned. Lack of recognition and esteem for secondees was a serious problem if they returned to their previous jobs, and for some within their secondments. However, secondees reported that their experiences were richly rewarding in terms of meeting challenges and developing both professionally and personally. Appendixes provide interview questions and a copy of the questionnaire form. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED359143

SHORT-TERM SECONDMENTS

An examination of the experience of an occupational transition in education

by

Paquita McMichael, Janet Draper and W A Gatherer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. McMichael

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Moray House Institute of Education
Heriot-Watt University

SB034425

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SHORT-TERM SECONDMENTS

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is meant by "secondment" 1
1.2 Categories of secondment and secondees 1
1.3 The growing importance of secondment 1
1.4 The benefits of secondment for organizations 2
1.5 The research concerns. 2

2 SOME THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO JOB CHANGE, INDUCTION, SETTLING IN AND EXIT

2.1 A model of job change experiences 2
2.2 The benefits of induction 3
2.3 Preparation for the post 4
2.4 Stages in transition 4
2.5 Change and surprise 5
2.6 Summary: effective induction 5
2.7 Leaving the secondment: exit 5

3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Framework for the inquiry 6
3.2 Research questions 6
3.3 The inquiry 7
3.3.1 Identification of the sample 7
3.3.2 Research methods 8
3.3.2.1 Interviews 8
3.3.2.2 The questionnaire 9

4 THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction 10
4.2 The secondees: their characteristics 10
4.2.1 Age and sex of secondees 10
4.2.2 Previous post and educational sector 10
4.3 First steps: detachment from previous post 11
4.3.1 Invitation or application 11
4.3.2 Motivations for application 12
4.4 The secondment is offered 13
4.4.1 Responses to the offer 13
4.4.2 Employer's response to a secondment 15
4.4.3 Professional anxieties on leaving pre-secondment post 16
4.5 From one job to the next 16
4.5.1 Notice and handing over 16
4.5.2 Preparation for secondment while still in post 16
4.5.3 Expectations of preparation phase of induction 17
4.6 Expectations and experiences of secondment: encounter 19
4.6.1 Intellectual challenge 19
4.6.2 Organizational integration and a defined role 20
4.6.3 Role definition, responsibility and autonomy 21

ISBN 0 901580538

4.7 "Settling in": adjustment 21
4.7.1 Time taken to settle in 21
4.7.2 Adjustment difficulties (nature of job, admin system, project planning, curriculum) 22
4.7.3 Positive and negative aspects of adjustment 23
4.7.4 Maintaining contact with previous job 26
4.7.5 Transitional surprises 26
4.8 Stabilization 28
4.8.1 A job that fits the person or a cause for complaint? 28
4.8.2 The development and use of secondees' strengths 29
4.9 The end of secondment and exit 31
4.9.1 Planning for the next job 31
4.9.2 Exit posts 31
4.9.3 The management of exit 32
4.10 Attachment and Detachment: was it worthwhile? 34
4.11 Detachment: return to former job 35
4.12 Returning to the theoretical frameworks 39

5 **CONCLUSIONS** 40

6 **RECOMMENDATIONS** 44

REFERENCES 45

APPENDIX A : Interview Schedule 46

APPENDIX B : Questionnaire 48

ShtTrmSec/004

ISBN 0 901580538

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was undertaken as a result of meeting many teachers on secondment to a variety of different bodies. Their descriptions of elation and despondency led us to question more deeply and more widely how their lives had been managed before entering, during the secondment, and after it. We therefore first want to thank the teachers who prompted our inquiry, some of whom we included in the research project itself. We were grateful for their frankness and their insights, and hope that others can gain from them.

Next we would wish to acknowledge our debt to all those who were interviewed and those who completed our lengthy questionnaire - in some cases both. We took up their precious time and have taken many months to report back to them. What we have to say is due to their help and cooperation. We hope that they feel we have adequately represented their experiences and satisfied their wish to affect the management of future secondments.

Without the help of the personnel departments of Colleges, Regions and the SCCC we should not have been able to trace the fifty contributors to this research. For some individuals tracking down one-time secondees was a tedious process which they carried out with good grace and good will.

We would like to express our thanks to the SOED and to Moray House for funding the study and providing us with much appreciated support. Finally the views expressed, are, of course, our own.

SHORT-TERM SECONDMENTS

An examination of the experience of an occupational transition in education

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is meant by 'secondment'

The term 'secondment' is generally used to refer to the short-term assignment of a professional person from one institution or organisation to another. Secondment is essentially different from ordinary work assignments, since it involves for the individual some significant changes in conditions of employment, including new forms of accountability and professional commitment. Ordinary work assignments are undertaken without the transfer of employees to other separate organisations: secondment, as we understand the concept, always means that the secondee becomes, albeit temporarily, an employee in a new organisation . In some cases a teacher, lecturer or administrator may be assigned to undertake work for the different organisation on a part-time basis - that is, for a set number of days per week, or weeks per term - without actually being transferred to that organisation as an employee. Although the term 'secondment' may be used loosely to describe such arrangements, we have preferred not to include them in our study. Instead we have concentrated on full-time attachments.

1.2 Categories of secondment and secondees

In this research project we investigated the experience of persons who have undertaken three kinds of secondment: secondment from school teaching to teaching in colleges of education; secondment from school or college teaching to posts in the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) or the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC); and secondment from teaching posts to other kinds of work within the regional Education Authorities (EAs). In each case the job change we were interested in was from a local authority or from a university, polytechnic or college as employer, and in each case the new employer was a college, or the SOED, or the SCCC, or a different branch of the EA organisation. The secondees whom we consulted and interviewed were all teachers, headteachers, advisers or lecturers. The employers from whom our secondees were transferred were Stow College, Jordanhill College, Glasgow Polytechnic and Moray House Institute, and the Lothian, Borders, Central and Strathclyde EAs.

1.3 The growing importance of secondment

In some parts of the education system the importance of recent, substantial practical experience has long been recognised; this is especially the case in teacher training and curriculum development, and secondment schemes have been developed to provide that kind of staff reinforcement. (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988) There has been a great increase in the use of secondment in recent years by the SOED, the SCCC, the teacher training institutions and the EAs. Secondments lasting for periods of a school term, a whole session or up to two sessions (usually for 23 months) have been frequent, particularly in the more populous areas where changes in place of employment can be made without undue personal inconvenience. In Strathclyde a widescale scheme of lengthier secondments has been successfully initiated. The SOED has evinced the view that academic staff in the teacher training institutions should comprise a substantial proportion of teachers seconded on fixed-term contracts. The SCCC conducts almost all its research and development activities through seconded staff supervised by a comparatively small number of permanent officers. All the larger EAs have utilised secondment schemes to help

teachers come to terms with the many innovations which confront them in the classroom. Secondment appears to be a useful device serving multiple functions in the education system.

1.4 The benefits of secondment for organisations

Although our prime interest lies in the experience of individual secondees, we are aware that secondment schemes in general have certain benefits to offer the organisations involved and the education system as a whole. Such benefits include a more economical use of staff over a period of time, since personnel may need to change in respect of the professional qualifications which the organisation requires. Again, a workforce can be more flexible if a proportion of the staff's capabilities can change in a relatively short time in accordance with changing organisational or professional needs in education. As in other professions, new staffing demands arise as processes change and new strategies are developed to implement new policies. As we have remarked, it was the benefit of injecting recent practical experience into the teacher training process which led government in the UK to propose a substantial growth in secondment. But it is precisely because secondment is so widely recognised as a beneficial device that it has become necessary to examine its impact on the persons involved in it. In this study we attend specifically to the impact of secondment on individuals; its impact on the organisations, however, forms an important ancillary study which in our research has derived mainly from the narratives and expressed views of the secondees consulted.

1.5 The research concerns

Secondments require a series of adjustments on the part of the secondee. There is often very little time given to ponder the decision to apply for, or accept, an opportunity. How are these opportunities planned for? How are they advertised? What lies behind a secondee's decision to change jobs, both in the way of personal interest and in the way of professional commitment? From the secondee's point of view, what are the implications of the change for the organisation to be left, for the colleagues left in the previous job, for the employer? Secondment normally requires a change of role: how does the secondee perceive such a change, and what strategies are available to prepare for the change? What can be learned from the literature on job change to suggest ways of helping secondees to cope with these new demands? What can be learned from secondees themselves about the problems of new role development, both initially and in the longer term? What forms of induction, for example, have been provided, and what has been expected of an induction programme? One of the most clearly evident problems faced by secondees is the process of 'exiting', that is leaving the temporary post to take up the original post, or another post with the former employer. What are secondees' views about their own experience, and about the ways such experience can be enhanced? Answers to these questions have been pursued through the recollections of 50 individuals, who have enjoyed the challenge of personal change in making a job change.

2 SOME THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO JOB CHANGE, INDUCTION, SETTLING IN AND EXIT

2.1 A Model of Job Change Experiences

In this exploration of secondees' experience we have made use of a number of perspectives on occupational mobility. In particular we have turned to Kelly's (1980) model for analysing job change and to the sequential framework for

examining transitions proposed by Nicholson and West (1989). In the first instance we present Kelly's approach.

As we anticipated a variety of personal outcomes we found his analysis relevant and useful since it takes account of both positive and negative consequences of moving to new jobs (attachment) and departure from previously held jobs (detachment). Within this framework positive consequences of job change are termed "gains" while negative consequences are termed "losses". "Attachment gains" are thus benefits which accrue within the new job; "detachment gains" are benefits from leaving the previous job. Similarly "attachment losses" refer to the negative consequences of acquiring the new job, while "detachment losses" refer to the negative consequences of leaving the previous job. The model of Gains, Losses, Attachment and Detachment (GLAD) is presented in Fig 1 below.

Fig 1 A Model of The Gains and Losses of Job Change (GLAD)

	ATTACHMENT	DETACHMENT
GAINS/ BENEFITS	Positive consequence of holding the new job	Positive consequences of leaving the previous job
LOSSES	Negative consequences of holding the new job	Negative consequences of leaving the previous job

Benefits therefore accrue both from the good aspects of the new job and through losing the negative aspects of the previous job. Losses arise from the undesirable characteristics of the new job and the loss of the desirable features of the previous job.

In considering the experiences of those taking up secondments, this model will be used to classify and clarify the findings.

2.2 The Benefits of Induction

We now turn to the analysis of the stages in adapting to new jobs, while bearing in mind that adaptation will partially depend on perceptions of gains and losses. The period of induction marks a major element in the transition from old to new.

Over the last fifteen years the literature on induction has grown, the central finding being that the faster a new member of staff settles in to an organisation the sooner the strengths for which s/he has been appointed will be harnessed for that organisation. As with much other recent personnel research the findings have suggested that what is good for the employee also has benefits for the employer. Thus while it seems obvious that the sooner a new entrant is integrated the better it will be for the individual, it has become apparent that a good well planned start in a new post has considerable benefits to the employer: faster use of strengths, more committed employees, lower turnover and greater job satisfaction.

In the case of secondments, where the essence of the post is its short term nature and the emphasis in selection might be expected to be on a specific set of knowledge and skills appropriate to the seconded post, it is particularly important that new entrants settle in as quickly as possible. If they spend a considerable period becoming orientated to and familiar with the job and the organisation then an inappropriately large part of their limited period may be spent in finding their feet.

2.3 Preparation for the Post

Models of induction vary but they agree that the period following selection and prior to actually taking up a post is important in establishing expectations about the job and the organisation. (Nicholson and West, 1989, Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). During this period, if information is available, the new entrant can begin to prepare for the post. Good preparation requires both that information is available and that the appointment is made sufficiently in advance of the starting date for the new entrant to begin to contemplate and plan for the new post. Successful preparation also hinges upon the demands of the previous post. In some cases these demands may continue to be pressing up until the point of leaving the post in which case very little preparation may be possible. Where staff believe they are likely to return to their post after a secondment has finished it may seem particularly important to hand over in such a way as to ensure continuity.

2.4 Stages in Transition

Nicholson and West identify four stages in transition into a new post. Preparation is the first, followed by Encounter which covers the first and subsequent few days in a new job. During Encounter a rudimentary map of the organisation, the job and working colleagues is established. This will be embellished in the months ahead during the Adjustment stage. Impressions formed in these first days about the organisation and the nature of the job will influence how the new entrant experiences the post. Some of these first impressions may become self-fulfilling prophecies. The key task for those planning this early on-the-job induction is ensuring that new staff learn first what they need to know first. They should not be over-(or under-)whelmed by information about what the job involves, what is expected of them and to whom they may turn for help. Indeed the first demands on them should be managed to ensure early success. This will help to maintain and restore their confidence, often under threat from the major change they are undergoing. Additional information should be offered as appropriate, preferably enabling people to avoid making mistakes rather than discovering how things are done by trial and error. Particularly unhelpful is a large pile of work awaiting their arrival when they do not know how to prioritise that work nor the standards expected of them. Even knowing whether conventional items of work are typically considered difficult reduces anxiety and fear of failure.

Later induction, in the Adjustment stage, is a more gradual process than Encounter. The new entrant takes in more information about the job organisation. The job makes demands on the person some of which can be met immediately while others require new learning. For some new entrants this is part of the reason for applying and many are stimulated by these demands. Drawing on the strengths and experience for which they were appointed, some secondees may develop and shape the post they are filling. For others there may be little scope for selecting the emphases of the post: some may then go on to feel that they are ill fitted for the post while many may be content with their lot. Feedback is an essential ingredient of adjustment, enabling the new entrant to learn from experience.

Once the adjustment phase has been completed and a settled view of the demands and possibilities of the job achieved, the member of staff moves into the final stage, Stabilisation, from which future career plans may develop.

Induction therefore for Nicholson and West (and others researching in the field) is a process which begins with the early stages of recruitment, continues after appointment to Day 1 of the job and then continues through an early stage of quick impressions to a later longer stage of adjusting on the basis of fuller information

and understanding, finally reaching the stage of stabilisation when transition is completed.

2.5 Change and Surprise

A further perspective on the transition into a new post is offered by Louis, Posner and Powell (1983). They found that different types of surprise were experienced. They termed 'Change' the difference between a new post and the previous one held. Some of this change may be predicted but many aspects are not clarified until the post begins. Clear recruitment information may go some way towards familiarising new entrants beforehand with the more likely dimensions of change.

'Surprise' was applied to differences between expectations of a job and the job as it was experienced. Again realistic job previews may reduce the likelihood of surprise, but good induction generally will play its part. Expectations of the job are built up during and after recruitment and, once the job has begun, during the Encounter phase. Accurate information and clear feedback are therefore important components in minimising the amount of surprise.

2.6 Summary: Effective Induction

Effective induction is enabling. It makes enough appropriate information available at each stage. It ensures support and feedback for new entrants and an assurance that their newness is recognised. It can assist them to develop the job in the light of their strengths (past and newly acquired).

2.7 Leaving the Secondment: Exit

We return to the framework shown in Fig 1 (GLAD) to examine the experience of the job change which follows the secondment. Although very little has been written on the process of exit this framework provides the tool for exploring the consequences of a further job change not long after the original move (approximately 23 months). Clearly the response to leaving the secondment will depend on the characteristics of the job being left. If the job to which the individual exits is not regarded with enthusiasm while the secondment is very positively perceived then the experience will be one of loss at the moment of detachment. This may be accompanied by a sense of stimulation forgone, a task not yet completed and newly acquired strengths wasted. If, on the other hand the secondment is perceived positively but followed by employment in an even more challenging position a sense of gain will accompany the move and detachment will not be a stressful experience. Indeed attachment to the next job will bring positive consequences.

Whether the move out of the secondment - the exit - is experienced as gain or loss may be partially affected by the forms of adjustment available to the individual (Nicholson, 1984). These consist of the adaptation of the person in response to environmental demands and secondly the manipulation of the environment to meet personal needs. In the case of secondments the second form of adjustment lies in the hands of the line managers whether in a setting to which the person returns or in the secondment itself. Key personality characteristics identified by Nicholson as relevant for adjustment are the degree of desire for control and for feedback. Key facets of the environment include discretion and novelty. For this study of secondment it is of importance to assess secondees' perception of control, feedback, discretion and novelty in both the secondment and the job to which they exit. This is of particular relevance to those individuals who return to their original jobs after their secondment. There are opportunities for mismatch at every job change.

Previous work by Gatherer and Edwards (1988) on secondment to Colleges of Education has shown clear advantages to teachers in the move: gains in confidence in working with adults, reflection on professional practice and involvement in a wider network which continued after their secondment finished. However, this same inquiry revealed doubts about the ease of detachment, citing the difficulty of leaving the variety of college life and returning to a narrower post in school. A suggestion from a local authority officer was quoted: that returners should receive counselling to facilitate readjustment to school, particularly if career enhancement had been expected.

Whereas the management of induction has attracted a great deal of attention the management of exit, particularly when the length of employment is predetermined, has not so far been explored. Unemployment and redundancy counselling with its emphasis on helping individuals to manage the bereavement process accompanying job loss has heightened awareness of the need to prepare individuals for change, to enhance their coping capacities and to encourage their readiness to adapt. (Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Hopson, 1984). When individuals experience a forced rather than a chosen job change, management may need to refer to the work on redundancy counselling, plan appropriately for exit and take account of possible damaging experience of loss. The question must be posed of who bears this responsibility for managing secondees' departure so that it does not destabilize the leaver during the last months of a secondment nor prevent the establishment of a new equilibrium on return to a previous post.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Framework for the Inquiry

Guided by the general literature on transitions we focussed the inquiry on the following major areas:

The Characteristics of secondees
Detachment from previous post
Attachment to new post

Preparation
Encounter
Adjustment
Stabilisation

Attachment Gains and Losses

Detachment from Secondment

Transition to old/new job

3.2 Research Questions

Personal encounters and the literature on occupational changes (eg Nicholson and West, 1988, and Hopson, 1984) and on educational transitions (eg Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Gartside et al, 1992) had led us to expect a number of difficulties. The research project, homing in on a specific type of job change - in to and out of secondment - was designed to provide us with some answers, however tentative, to the following questions:

- What sort of people became secondees?
- What were the motivations and expectations of these secondees?
- What form of induction, if any, was provided?
- How was this induction perceived?
- How and how well were initial adjustments made?
- What balance was achieved between fitting and developing this job?
- In what ways was exit from the secondment managed?
- What sort of adjustment was made by secondees who exited into their former post?
- Were there important differences in the experience of secondees to different organisations?

Our intention is to draw from our findings recommendations for future action. It must, however, be noted here that some changes in procedures have been set in train since some of our respondents completed their secondments.

3.3 The Inquiry

3.3.1 Identification of the Sample

In order to explore the range of secondment experiences that different educational organisations might provide the following were approached: SOED, SCCC, Colleges of Education and Regional Education Authorities.

In the event, secondees proved more difficult to track down than was at first anticipated, and were pursued by a variety of routes.

1 The SOED, SCCC, and three Colleges of Education (Jordanhill, Moray House and St Andrews) were asked to provide lists of secondees who had carried out 23 month secondments beginning in 1988/89 and ending by December 1991.

2 Strathclyde, Lothian, Central, Fife and Borders Regions were similarly asked to provide lists of recent secondees to the SOED, SCCC and Colleges. In due course, the first three regions also supplied a number of inward secondments.

3 The researchers exploited their own contacts with secondees.

Over 8 months 50 individuals were contacted. Twenty were interviewed and all 50 responded to a questionnaire inquiry. These individuals were distributed between the different employers in the following ways:

Employer		No of Secondees
SOED (including CAST)		6
SCCC		11
REGIONS		23
Central	5	
Lothian	11	
Strathclyde	7	
COLLEGES		10
Jordanhill	2	
Moray House	4	
St Andrews	4	

A larger sample might have been desirable, but we were handicapped by the following factors:

1 The pattern of secondments to the SCCC was more often part-time than full time, and we were interested in those who had experienced a complete transition to the new job;

2 Many of the individuals whose names we were given had had secondments which fell outside our date limits and which were for relatively short periods;

3 A number of ex-secondees proved neither to be at the address suggested by their former secondment employer nor at their pre-secondment address.

Many respondents indicated their pleasure in being able to give us their opinions and wrote at some length to us. News of the project travelled by word of mouth and we received a number of requests for the questionnaire we ultimately distributed. We decided to close the lists once we had collected 50 appropriate respondents in the belief that we would have an adequate numerical basis for comment on the secondment process.

3.3.2 Research Methods

The research included interviews and a questionnaire and was carried out over the period September 1991 to May 1992.

3.3.2.1 Interviews

It was decided to interview a group of secondees who had had secondments with 4 types of educational employer. This interview was carried out in order to gain a broad understanding of the issues as perceived by those who had experienced secondments. On the basis of the interview responses a questionnaire was planned and issued early in 1992.

The interview schedule (see Appendix A) was designed to cover the major stages of the secondment and its aftermath: Preparation, Induction, Settling in, Exit and Post Secondment. These stages were chosen as aspects of transition in to and out of secondment which were likely to present difficulties and which might need attention by both secondment and other employers.

The questions were based on the view of occupational transitions proposed by Nicholson and West (1988) and drew on Kelly's GLAD model of Job Change and

explored motivations, expectations, experiences of achievement and support as well as of strangeness and discomfort. The interview was conducted as a semi-structured exploration of experience.

Twenty individuals were interviewed. Their secondments were distributed as follows:

Employer	Number of Secondees Interviewed
SOED and CAST	4
SCCC	4
REGIONS	8
COLLEGES	4

The interviews were timed for one hour, but often ran well over this time because of the evident need of the interviewees to discuss their experiences with a detached but sympathetic outsider.

3.3.2.2 **The Questionnaire**

On the basis of the interview results a questionnaire was devised which was sent not only to 30 further secondees but also to the original 20 interviewees (see Appendix B). This was to ensure that we had collected an adequate data base on the whole group of 50.

The questionnaire broadly followed the design of the interview, but was based on the range of responses obtained in these encounters. A major consideration was to limit the demands posed by open-ended questions. Consequently, the schedule was both long and elaborate and presented as alternative responses the variety of answers obtained in the interviews.

The major headings under which the questionnaire was organised related to the research questions and the overall theoretical framework. They were:

A Personal Details (Sex, Age, Sector, Post, Organisation to which seconded, length of secondment)

B First Steps (application, motivation)

C The Secondment is Offered (response to being offered the job, professional anxieties on leaving post, personal feelings, employer's response, expectations of induction)

D From One Job to the Next (notice, use of interim period, contact with previous job)

E Settling-In Period (time taken, difficult aspects, surprises)

F Experience of Secondment (perceptions, the development and use of strengths, job fit, discomfort in job, support group)

G End of Secondment (inquiry about other jobs, return to old job/move to new job, management of exit, perceptions of return to old job, use of strengths in old/new job)

H Review of Secondment Experience

Following the last section respondents were invited to offer advice to a friend contemplating applying for or accepting a secondment.

4 THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this section we present findings obtained from both questionnaire and interview data. We have used interview material to elaborate on and give meaning to the bare figures which emerged from the computer analyses of the questionnaire returns.

Except when the data called for a more elaborate analysis we have presented the results in the simple form of total responses to a given question. On occasion, when there were significant differences between employers that called for comment we have presented the material in such a way as to provide the basis for comparison although numbers in each category are usually too small for formal statistical analysis.

4.2 The Secondees: their characteristics

4.2.1 Age and Sex of Secondees

Although aware that individuals selected for secondment were likely to have had considerable experience in their various fields, whether in specific areas of the curriculum or in aspects of management, we were not expecting a particular distribution with respect to sex, age or previous post. In the event we found that 22 of our respondents were men and 28 women, with just over half of them being in the age range 41 to 50. Of those who were under 40 most were women and from the primary sector.

Table 1: Age and Sex of Secondees

	Age				
Sex	**21-30**	**31-40**	**41-50**	**over 50**	**Totals**
Men	0	0	15	3	22
Women	2	9	11	6	28
Totals	2	13	26	9	50

4.2.2 Previous Post and Educational Sector

The secondees were largely in the Primary or Secondary sectors of education, although one had held a University post and another had worked in a Polytechnic and a third had been in Further Education. One came from a Nursery school.

As might be expected, given that they were offered secondments because of their special skills, nearly all of them were in promoted posts. These were distributed in the following way.

Table 2: Pre-Secondment Posts

Head Teacher	Assistant Head Teacher	Principal Teacher	Senior Teacher	Teacher
17	9	12	3	4

Most of the Primary secondees (83%) were head teachers. Over half of the secondary secondees were Principal Teachers.

From the further and higher education sectors there were a researcher, a lecturer and a senior lecturer.

Although our original intention had been to select secondees who had completed 23 month secondments, in fact, by the time we had pursued a number of different routes to acquiring a sample of 50, the actual range was from between 6 and 12 months (n=9) to between 3 and 5 years (n=3). As expected most secondees had a secondment of between 13 and 23 months (n=34). The longer secondments, ie 2 years and more, were a result of renewed or new contracts rather than lengthy secondments in the first place.

4.3 First Steps: Detachment from Previous Post

4.3.1 Invitation or Application

The majority of secondment posts are now advertised, and most of the secondees we consulted went through the process of formal application and interview, although this was by no means universal. Indeed there is an interesting difference between the SOED and SCCC and the Colleges and Regions as Table 3 indicates.

Table 3: Applications for Advertised Posts and Employing Agency

Application	SOED	SCCC	Regions	Colleges	Univ	Totals
Applied	3	0	21	8	1	33
did not apply	3	11	1	2	0	17

Interviews revealed that many individuals had been approached to ascertain their interest and had been persuaded to make applications. As some put it, they were "fingered". These secondees worked largely on projects in curriculum development or school management training.

It appears that the SCCC and the SOED recruited mainly through invitation, though in seven cases the Regions and Colleges had suggested that secondees apply for an advertised post. It would seem that secondees' reputation had a significant effect on their recruitment.

Secondments to the teacher training institutions occur regularly and often attract a considerable amount of interest: consequently, though their senior staff might well

sound out teachers known to be outstanding, it is in the interest of overt fairness that posts should usually be advertised and filled through interview.

4.3.2 Motivation for Secondment Application

As is to be expected, people have a mixture of reasons for seeking secondment. A majority of the secondees we consulted in interviews were already keenly interested in the kind of work the new post seemed to offer: educational development, research, influential communicating with other professionals, helping to improve the teaching of a subject or a curricular area, working with teachers to improve their competence - all these were mentioned as motivators.

A number of our respondents were also looking for change, having been in their posts for some time. They were all performing well in these posts, but a number felt that they needed new stimulation. Among the attractions of secondment were the prospect of "a different perspective" and "the opportunity to meet a wider range of people". We were strongly impressed by the strength of the secondees' motivations. (Indeed, a few, albeit unwillingly, entered the new post at a reduced salary.) It is clear that secondment of the type we researched attracts people with strong interest in educational development, in staff development and in project management. There may well be a powerful reservoir of such interest in the profession at large, ready to be drawn upon for the enhancement of the education system as a whole.

In applying for a new job, even a short-term one, applicants weigh up its expected advantages (attachment gains). They may also be aware of benefits to leaving their present employment (detachment gains). We put to those questionnaire respondents who had actively **applied** for secondment the range of responses indicated by our interview group and found that all of the 33 believed that the job would give them opportunities for professional development, while many had additional motives.

Table 4: Motivation for Applications

Attachment Gains	**Number**	**Per Cent**
Professional development	33	100.0
Use of strengths	29	87.9
Change	22	66.7
Career opportunities	19	57.6
Detachment Gains		
Long enough in present job	15	45.5
Escape from present job	9	27.3

Although it might be expected that career opportunities would be a very common motive for such a move Table 4 shows that it was less pervasive than the wish for change. Many of the secondees had been a considerable length of time in their pre-

secondment posts and were looking for variety. At the same time there was a perhaps surprising number who were anxious to escape from their existing posts; indeed in a later section of the questionnaire over 40 per cent of the total sample of 50 indicated that they felt relief at leaving their previous job. Many felt that they had had enough time to exploit the job's potential and that it was time to move on. Nevertheless, when first they were offered the secondment 23 out of 50 hoped to return to their pre-secondment posts.

In short, we found a split between those who wished to return to their previous post and those who were ready to admit that they saw the secondment as not only a change in itself but the opportunity for further change and, possibly career enhancement. Interestingly, career enhancement was a motive for all 12 principal teachers and seven of the nine AHTs, but was not mentioned by headteachers, most of whom stressed change. As the secondees leave their jobs we shall see whether their hope for continued changes and career development were realised.

4.4 The Secondment is Offered

4.4.1 **Responses to the Offer** (whole sample, n = 50)

Again making use of interview responses to the question on how they had felt on being offered the secondment, we supplied six possibilities and asked our questionnaire respondents to select the three they felt most strongly applied to them. All of them can be interpreted as attachment gains. Table 5 indicates that gain in experience, intrinsic interest in the work and the opportunity to work with a wide range of people were the items which touched most of the secondees.

Table 5: Responses to the offer of secondment

	Number	Per Cent
Gain in experience	41	82
Interest in subject/type of work	41	82
Opportunity to work with wide range of people	40	80
Career possibilities	18	36
Pleasure in security of return to job	5	10
Realisation of an ambition	3	6

The three most instrumental alternatives, relating to security and career, were the least popular. As we have already noted the secondees were very professionally orientated in their replies to our questions, though a primary/secondary difference in career orientation was again apparent.

However, as one interviewed head teacher put it:

> I looked on the fact of 23 months as being a good thing: that I could go and do whatever they wanted me to do, but I knew that I could come back. Perhaps it's a security thing .....

Considering the secondees' talents to be manifest not only to their secondment employers but to themselves we were intrigued by some of the feelings they expressed on learning of the secondment.

They were asked in the questionnaire, as in the interview, to respond to a question on this subject. Table 5 indicates the responses.

Table 6: Feelings on appointment

	Degree		
Feelings	**A lot**	**A little**	**Not at all***
Pleasure at the compliment	38	11	0
Satisfaction over recognition	20	22	3
Surprise at being chosen	10	25	9
Anxiety about performance	6	32	8
Relief over leaving previous job	6	15	16**

* There are missing values for all these items as respondents were able to indicate that they felt an item did not apply to them.

** This item was discussed in §4.3.2

Many volunteered in the interview that they had been surprised at being selected. This might have been expected of those secondees to the SOED and SCCC where an invitation had been received rather than an application made but was a widely expressed feeling across all employers. The secondees though aware of their strengths had not supposed that others might be equally aware. Most were somewhat anxious about the new job, perhaps understandably as it was a step into an only semi-comprehended new world.

Lastly, we report the widespread pleasure and satisfaction at their appointment very powerfully expressed below:

> Oh, I was absolutely overjoyed. I was overjoyed from two points of view, because of the expectations and hopes I had but also I was overjoyed because I was escaping from this school.

Another secondee (to a region) also had complex feelings, but was equally enthusiastic:

> I was wondering what they would want me to do in schools, what sort of in-service they might ask me to do, wondering if I could cope with being up front there, just exactly what I would do. But overall, the feeling was let's go for it. This is a big opportunity.

4.4.2 The employer's response to a secondment

We asked the secondees in the interview and again in the questionnaire about the response of their employers to their appointments. Was it as enthusiastic as that of the secondees? We anticipated some ambivalence amongst EA officials at appointments to the SOED, SCCC and Colleges since they might be permanently losing their most able promoted teachers, although if they returned, regaining an employee with enhanced professional capability. EA officials might also be concerned about the quality of replacements, particularly in the case of headteachers.

We offered a number of responses gleaned from the interviews to the questionnaire respondents.

Table 7: Employers' responses to secondments

Employers' Responses	Number	Per Cent
General encouragement and support	39	78
Pleasure at enhanced professional skills	22	44
Anxiety about failure to return	11	22
Worry over unsatisfactory replacement	11	22
Surprise	4	8

Fortunately, as the table reveals, by far the majority were encouraged by their employers, although there were a significant number whose appointments induced anxiety and a lack of support. Nine secondees reported that there were differences between their immediate superiors (perhaps, headteachers) and their overall employer (for example, the EA), thereby suggesting that anxiety over replacement or substitutions might prevent enthusiastic support of a secondment. "I didn't realise until at the interview the person who was representing the region was nasty. He said, "And how do you think the parents are going to feel about you leaving the school?". And I said, "Well I think they would be quite pleased to have someone who has been enriched by the experience coming back after two years." And he said, "Huh, that's a joke, whoever goes back after secondments?". Perhaps the least complimentary employers' response, reported with wry amusement by interviewed secondees, was simply surprise that they had been selected.

4.4.3 Professional anxieties on leaving the pre-secondment post

In organizational terms detachment from the pre-secondment post was not always a simple matter, although in most cases (n=26) it was managed smoothly enough. Nine of the 50 secondees were not satisfied that they had left their responsibilities in good hands, six expressing anxieties over what might happen to the curriculum in their absence and over the maintenance of good relationships in their schools. Difficulties were also anticipated in community relationships by four and in overall administration by two secondees. Some headteachers leaving their schools had qualms over their substitutes (doubts shared in some cases by the EA).

Other difficulties arose over the speed of handing responsibilities on to a substitute. Twelve secondees, of whom six were principal teachers, considered that there had been little time for this and that last minute arrangements did not give them a feeling of confidence.

4.5 From One Job to the Next

In the light of these and other experiences some of our secondees felt that the planning of their secondment was muddled. Muddle occurred both at the handover stage in their pre-secondment job and when they entered the secondment. Procedures were far from standardized and often appeared to depend on the imagination and goodwill of the secondees themselves as well as on their seniors in the new employment.

In the following sections we detail some of the administrative decisions (or lack of them) and the responses made by the secondees.

4.5.1 Notice and Handing Over

Notice varied enormously from the week given for transfer to two respondents to the six weeks or more provided for 13. This leaves 33 or two thirds of the secondees having to make a move in between two and six weeks. The handing over process, as we have already mentioned, was perceived as rushed by many, in particular by the Principal Teachers. Nevertheless, a formal transfer of responsibilities, to include records and duties, was achieved by 34, with ten using a shadowing system to teach their successor - invaluable in the case of Headteachers.

More disturbing is the fact that 16 reported leaving without formal handover, thus providing the next incumbent of the post with an all too empty slate. This is, of course, a common occurrence at the end of a term or session but does not lead to continuity and stability.

4.5.2 Preparation for secondment while still in post

Consistent with the experience of feeling rushed over their departure 19 of the secondees reported that they had no time to consider the impending secondment, since they were too busy preparing for the handover. Again, this situation bears particularly on individuals in senior positions. However, despite this the responses were often very positive. In the table below we enumerate them.

Table 8: Secondees' Preparation

Forms of Preparation	No	Per Cent
Thought about the issues	36	72
Read in the area	27	54
Visited people to obtain background information	19	38
Planned what to do in the job	15	30
Prepared materials	7	14

It can be seen that many secondees, in keeping with their generally energetic professionalism, took considerable steps to prepare themselves for the transfer, mentally sorting out matters of importance and seeking information on which to base their new activities. The seven who went so far as to prepare materials were moving to reasonably well defined jobs. Not all, however, had the time to use the period of their notice constructively.

4.5.3 Expectations of the Preparation Phase of Secondment: Induction

Before our respondents made the transfer to their new jobs they had formed certain expectations, not always realized in practice. Such expectations may have grown out of an idealized anticipation on the one hand and on the other a certain degree of cynicism based on previous experience in various branches of the educational system.

We felt it appropriate to analyse expectations in tandem with actual experiences, in order to explore the induction process from two perspectives. In Table 8 we present the expectations and experiences of a number of induction procedures. The expectations of secondees from each employer are listed first followed by individuals' actual experiences in brackets.

Table 9: Procedures

	Expected and Experienced				
Procedures	SOED	SCCC	Regions	Colleges	**Totals**
Pre-Sec briefing	5 (4)	10 (7)	18 (11)	19 (5)	43 (27)
Information pack	1 (1)	4 (5)	4 (2)	6 (2)	15 (10)
Formal induction	3 (1)	5 (1)	15 (7)	11 (5)	34 (14)
Regular briefing	5 (5)	9 (7)	15 (14)	9 (1)	38 (27)
Mentor	4 (4)	7 (6)	9 (13)	8 (3)	28 (26)
Training	1 (1)	1 (0)	11 (5)	8 (0)	21 (6)

A quick glance at the Totals column reveals that on every aspect of induction more secondees expected it than had their expectations fulfilled, the gap between expectations and experience being most extreme in the case of a formal induction procedure. Pre-secondment briefings were anticipated by nearly all the secondees but only slightly over half received them. Regular briefings were also expected by most but not universally enjoyed. With regard to training, although relatively few expected it very few indeed received it. This must be of particular concern when the job is not one which has to be created, as in the work of development officers, but is of a more established kind, such as may be found in a college lectureship.

This brings us to an examination of the items as they relate to the employing agencies. Overall, item by item, the colleges emerge as the least successful in providing an induction that meets their secondees' expectations. Since they are educational institutions with training of adults as their central concern it is a disappointing result.

With regard to the other types of secondment, all of which had a developmental role, though training was relatively uncommon, other forms of support may well have filled the gap. For example, regular briefings and mentoring arrangements were fairly extensively provided and in the case of the Regions were provided in more cases than expected.

Differences between the formal training institutions (the colleges) and the development centred branches of educational organizations no doubt reflect the nature of the work. But as we shall go on to see, the absence of regular briefings and a mentoring relationship significantly hampered secondees' "stabilisation" wherever it occurred.

Very few of our interviewees were satisfied that they had been given adequate information about the new job, its nature, demands or conditions of service. In the case of secondments to the SOED and the SCCC the negotiations tended to be personal and informal, the absence of explicit information being compensated for by the friendly relationships established with the senior officers responsible. Nevertheless, many secondees voiced their dissatisfaction with such remarks as:

I was very unsure as to when I should start, the exact date, where I should go, who I should report to . . .

I really was told nothing about what I would be expected to do . . .

I knew the remit that I would have, but didn't really know what would be involved.

The job description was generated later than I got there.

These remarks make it clear that an undesirable vagueness attended the transition to the new job. Undoubtedly, some of this vagueness derived from the fact that the employers themselves were in the process of developing their definition of the job, but it led to the secondees being unexpectedly faced with demands for which they were not prepared and for which they had not received training.

4.6 Expectations and experiences of secondment: encounter

In the questionnaire we included 13 items which had been mentioned by our interviewed secondees, dividing them into rough categories of (1) Intellectual Challenge, (2) Organizational Integration, and (3) Role Definition and relating them to expectations and experiences. As in the previous tables we have placed the number of respondents with a particular experience in brackets following the number who had expectations of it.

4.6.1 Intellectual Challenge

Table 10: The expectations and experience of intellectual challenge

Expected and Experienced	
Inellectual Challenge	**Total**
Intellectual challenge	36 (33)
People more expert than self	32 (21)
Stimulation from new colleagues	40 (42)
Time for scholarship	15 (11)
Opportunity for research	20 (15)
Knowledge of system	47 (44)

As before we found that experiences did not match expectations, although it is good to record that stimulation from new colleagues was very widely reported.

An examination of the table in some detail yields the observation that an extension of knowledge and expertise was fairly widely expected, in particular an increase in knowledge of the wider Scottish or regional education system. In most cases this expectation was satisfied by events. Nearly all of the secondees tended to travel round either a region or the country as a whole and were exhilarated by the experience. A number craved time for reading and research and, though not all

won this time, several were able to enjoy deepening their understanding in this way. The intellectual challenge provided by the work and by their colleagues was expected and frequently experienced, though not as many as had expected to do so found others more expert than themselves. Overall, however, some two thirds of the secondees seem to have felt that their expectations of intellectual challenge had been met. It is perhaps interesting to note that not all expected greater intellectual demands than their previous job offered, this possibly reflecting not so much their low expectations of the secondment as their strong academic commitment to their pre-secondment post.

4.6.2 Organizational Integration and a Defined Role

Table 11: Expectations and experiences of organizational integration

	Expected and Experienced
Organizational Integration	**Total**
Team work	38 (34)
Isolation	6 (21)

Table 12: Expectations and experiences of role definition

	Expected and Experienced
Role Definition	**Total**
Demands for autonomous work	43 (46)
Well defined tasks	33 (18)
Line Management responsibility	28 (14)
Administrative challenge	22 (25)
Heavy responsibility	17 (23)

Whether or not they had come from posts which emphasized team work three quarters of the secondees expected to find it as part of the new job. This may have been because of assurances given them or because of a belief that a team would be necessary to carry out particular development or teaching jobs. In some instances, respondents were given specific projects to deal with and did not anticipate working in close harmony with others, though they did not expect to work in isolation. The figure of 21 secondees who experienced isolation is an alarming result, and should cause employers to think carefully about how work is structured. When this is combined with the observations on the less than complete provision of regular

briefing and mentoring based on Table 9, then it is to be anticipated that secondees may have difficulty in settling in and adjusting to the secondment.

In fact, some of the interviews showed secondees struggling with isolation, and with guilt if they asked too many questions. Indeed, work in a college, for instance, often takes place in a climate of frantic busyness, although all also reported friendly interchanges.

> I find that people at that level of education are so busy chasing their own tail with the enormous amount of work that comes their way . . . that the planning for a secondee would come at the bottom of the heap.

On the other hand:

> Because X was a senior lecturer she looked after me, and colleagues in the study that I was sharing were extremely helpful.

When the difficulty of isolation and uncertainty was overcome in a college, it could arise in the context of joint planning of a course.

> I think with (a curriculum area) they were actually still planning and the head of it had a meeting of the team before each step was planned. I felt much better about that. Before (in another part of the college course) I wasn't involved in any of the thinking through of the material and people assumed that I knew all sorts of things which I didn't know at all.

4.6.3 Role definition, responsibility and autonomy

Over 80 per cent of the secondees expected to have considerable autonomy, though fewer expected this to involve heavy responsibility or challenging administrative activity. Interestingly between half and two thirds anticipated clear line management responsibility and well defined tasks, though, in the event far fewer found either. As shown many were, however, prepared for a degree of personal responsibility for developing the job, though uncertain what this would entail. An SCCC Development Officer remarked:

> I felt vulnerable because everyone felt vulnerable when they were speaking 5-14 because nobody was sure of anything about it and how it was going to turn out and who should be saying what and how the hell did you get this job anyway?

In fact, attached to development work there were not only matters of direct curriculum concern but also the management of workshops for other teachers at one end of the scale and conferences at the other, neither of which had been within the previous experience of most of the secondees.

4.7 "Settling-in": Adjustment

4.7.1 Time taken to "settle-in"

We have just seen that the secondees had difficulties in establishing their role and that many of them felt isolated, the difficulties being more marked amongst college secondees than amongst those seconded to other employers. We asked them how long it took them to settle in, given the difficulties, and where particular difficulties might lie. Although we asked secondees to indicate whether it had taken them one,

two, three, four to six or over six months to settle in we have simplified the table to produce only 3 categories.

Table 13: Length of time taken to settle in to secondment

Time	Employers				Totals	
	SOED	SCCC	Regions	Colleges*	n	per cent
one month	4	6	6	3	17	34
2-3 months	2	4	9	2	17	34
over 3 months	0	1	8	3	12	24

* Two of the college respondents did not reply to this question

A surprising number of secondees reported settling in within a month, though this was less frequent amongst those in regional or college employment. Similarly it was the regions and the colleges who had secondees still struggling to settle in more than six months after appointment (two in each case).

4.7.2 Adjustment Difficulties

We pursued the point on "settling in" with a question which particularized difficulties mentioned to us by interviewees. Firstly we report the problems presented by grasping the administrative arrangements in a new job, as in the situation described here:

> It was difficult to understand the structure of the system, and despite being informed, I discovered it wasn't how it actually worked. It took some time to work out how things operated, for instance the role of the administrative support staff wasn't clear: what could be expected of them and what I could ask them to do. Sometimes I asked too little and sometimes I asked too much.

Some remained in doubt as to the nature of the job, an uncertainty vividly described in this quotation:

> I sort of found myself in a new role. The first day of my secondment I came away thinking, "My goodness, the only thing I have done today is to find out where to get paper clips from. I thought somebody's paid me a lot of money to do that . . ." I likened myself to the Star Child in 2001; that's a new creature born and didn't quite know what was going to happen next, but we would think of something. It got better over time.

Another type of uncertainty beset those seconded to the colleges.

> I had to make an effort to find a way to work with students . . . I think I learned quite a lot about teaching in higher education. That was quite an adjustment.

> Learning for adults is just the same as for children, but I didn't know how to present them with the sort of experience they go through to understand. I didn't know how to do that with adults. Honestly, I really did think that if you told adults things, they would know.

College lecturers were in some cases taken aback by the nature of the college curriculum and its formalism:

> Their planning was so particular. Students weren't allowed to plan in any way they wanted to, it had to be laid out in a certain way and there were things like objectives which it took me quite a long time to understand, even, what was an objective, you know. They had to be absolutely right and there had to be a clear change in the learning. I found that difficult to understand, as did the students.

Project planning was not new to everyone, but the degree of responsibility they carried was often greater. It was therefore a problematic area. An example of the struggle for clarity appears below:

> When I first started off a lot of the material in the project had an end product, of a pack of some kind. But I wasn't too sure how to go about it. I knew what the structures of the packs were, but I hadn't internalized it, so I was kind of messing around and trying to sort out what was the best way to approach it. I gradually learned things like . . . how it should be produced, who it should be aimed at, the style of writing and so on. It began to become second nature, so when I started up a group I started to produce a checklist of things that I needed to do and the order in which I should do it and the type of instructions that I should give to working party members, and at the end I could do it in the double jig time.

How widespread then were these sorts of problems? Table 13, which does not distinguish between employers since they differed very little, indicates that about a half of the secondees found a difficulty in each of these areas.

Table 14: Difficulties in settling in

Difficulties	n	per cent
Finding out the nature of the job	26	52
Learning the administrative system	31	62
Planning projects	23	46
Getting to grips with the curriculum (for 10 college secondees only)	6	60 (of 10)

The problems outlined by secondees seemed in most cases possible to solve or avoid through appropriate training in the induction period

4.7.3 The Experience of Secondment - Positive and Negative aspects of "Adjustment"

We asked our respondents to consider their overall experience but found that many of the points they made, both good and bad, were reflections on the adjustment stage. These points were collected together and presented in randomized order in the questionnaire. Here they appear in two tables, one picking out the positive aspects of the adjustment experience and the other the negative.

The questionnaire items were phrased so as to allow respondents to indicate whether they felt a particular statement applied to them: "Most of the time", "Often", "Sometimes" or "Never". Although the statements could have been analyzed by means of a scoring system we have chosen to present them in terms of secondee numbers in the belief that this provides a clearer picture of how widespread were particular perceptions of experience. Lastly, for the sake of simplicity, we collapsed the first two categories together to form a new category - "Frequently" (F) and the last two to create "Rarely" (R).

Table 15: Positive experiences of secondment

Positive Experiences	SOED		SCCC		Regions		Colleges		Totals	
	F	R	F	R	F	R	F	R	F	R
Felt one of a team	4	2	9	2	16	7	5	5	34	16
Expertise used	6	0	10	1	21	2	5	5	42	8
Scope to shape job	5	1	8	3	19	4	3	7	35	15
Sense of ownership	6	0	11	0	19	4	4	6	40	10
Congruence with values	6	0	10	1	17	5	6	4	38	10

In general the secondments seemed to have provided most people with a reasonable degree of latitude to use expertise, shape the job, and acquire a feeling of ownership within a system that accorded with their values. As we saw in Table 10 the team experience was fairly widespread, being proportionately least available to secondees in colleges. A close look at the figures reveals that, whereas in all other employment the proportion of secondees undergoing positive adjustment experiences "frequently" was considerably higher than those with such experiences occurring "rarely", proportionately fewer individuals in the colleges were so well provided for. On average each college secondee had 2.3 positive experiences "frequently" whereas all the other employers were able to provide an average of 4 to 4.5 at this level.

We now elaborate on the negative experiences accompanying adjustment to secondment, already touched on in 4.7.2, pursuing again the question of whether secondment to colleges is perceived less well than secondment in the field of development.

Table 16: Negative experiences

Negative Experiences	SOED		SCCC		Regions		Colleges		Totals	
	F	R	F	R	F	R	F	R	F	R
Unaware of job requirements	0	6	0	11	4	19	1	9	5	45
Pressure to fit job	0	6	0	11	4	19	6	4	10	40
Unreasonable demands	0	6	1	10	3	20	0	10	4	46
Treated as "work horse"	0	6	1	10	9	14	4	6	14	36
Worked alone	2	4	7	4	12	11	6	4	27	23
Had little impact	0	6	0	10	3	18	2	7	5	41
Lost confidence	0	6	1	10	1	22	1	9	3	47

The general picture is reassuring: most secondees rarely felt unaware of the job requirements; they did not think that unreasonable demands were made of them or that they were put under undue pressure to fit the job, or worse, that they were treated as "work horses". Nor did they in general lose confidence and feel that they lacked impact. Many, however, (27) said that they frequently had to work alone. Although this may be a negative perception only in association with a sense of isolation, we must remember that isolation was reported by 21 of the secondees (see Table 10).

We now draw attention to the 10 secondees from the colleges who on average had 2 negative perceptions each compared to 1.5 for those in Regional development posts, 0.9 for SCCC secondees and 0.3 for SOED secondees. We assume that moving to a job which has a pre-determined, and often heavy, workload for which they had not been particularly well prepared by their previous teaching posts created considerable stress. This was probably more intense as at the time of the research regular briefing or mentoring had not been formally instituted.

We capture a little of the pain caused to some secondees in the following quotations.

> They were very welcoming and I was able to ask any questions that I wanted to ask, but you don't learn by asking questions and getting answers, it's just through experience, isn't it? So I didn't ever go in and have a tutorial with somebody else, which I feel would have been very helpful . . . I was twinned with somebody to do the third year tutorials and that person told me what she was going to do in her tutorials and I went and did it. And that was the beginning of the absolute nightmare, because what I very quickly learned was that you can't do what other people tell you to do, and you can't copy what other people are doing. You have to have an investment in the learning and the teaching that is going and working out your own.

> A problem was that you had to know the system and I had to keep saying, "That's right, isn't it?". That's okay when you are absolutely on top of a job but when you don't know what you are doing and you are saying, "That's right, isn't it" to your students, it's terrible.

Loneliness, fear of the unknown, anxiety about their own adequacy, confusion - these were cited as traumatic reactions at the outset of many secondments, not only those of college secondments. "You weren't quite sure what was wanted of you"; "it was very lonely"; "I had questions over what I was trying to do"; "I was deskilled": these quotations indicate something of the insecurity of secondees faced with new tasks, new responsibilities and new professional contexts without sufficient support from the organization which had recruited them. Yet all the secondees we consulted were outstanding performers in their former jobs, excellent and experienced teachers, highly competent, keenly interested and strongly committed professionals. Because of their high professional quality they adjusted to the new work, most of them, before long; but their memories of the beginning period remained sharp and - for some - rather bitter.

4.7.4 Maintaining contact with the previous post

It also occurred to us that secondees having so short a period of immersion in their new job and in many cases anticipating a return to their previous post might feel torn between one and the other. In fact seven had regular periods back in their previous job (two heads, two principal teachers, one senior teacher and two lecturers). These periods were in some cases designed to ease a handover and in others to prepare for new tasks to be undertaken on return, so they followed no particular pattern. They were not always easy to manage however, four reporting being caught between obligations to old and new posts, and feeling unable to commit themselves fully to either. These four found themselves working exceptionally hard, effectively trying to do two full time jobs.

> You get your priorities thrown up in the air. You don't know which way to go.

Others kept in touch in a less formal way. More than half (n = 26) reported that they were still in touch six months after the secondment began. Much of this contact was social rather than professional and less of a hindrance to settling in to the new post.

4.7.5 Transitional suprises

Aspects of the settling in period are the sense of discontinuity, the return to ignorance, the apparent loss of skill and know-how. These we have already touched on in §4.7.2 and §4.7.3. There are of course other more positive surprises.

We asked the secondees whether they had been surprised by the change, and requested them to compare firstly the previous job with the secondment and secondly the expectation of the secondment with the reality. We asked whether differences had seemed "not at all", "a little" or "very surprising". In Table 17 we report those indicating that they were a little or very surprised by the transition.

Table 17: Transitional surprises

	Employers					
Surprise over Differences	**SOED**	**SCCC**	**Regions**	**Colleges**	**Totals**	**n per cent**
Between previous job and secondment	5	5	16	5	31	63
Between expectations and reality	4	6	20	8	38	76

Surprise seems widespread with some two thirds of the secondees undergoing unanticipated experiences. As we might have expected from Table 12 this sensation is more frequently found among college and regional secondees who took a longer time to settle in. But since positive differences were quite frequent there is no simple relationship between surprise and delay in adjusting to a new job. Positive surprises included a change in the manner in which an individual was received (particularly the case for NDOs who had come from regional positions). It was a chance to step outside the usual status hierarchy.

> I was special and it's funny really looking back on it because I suppose some of them, they obviously thought I was more important than I was, and I would be welcomed with extra politeness, effusive welcoming, looking after me, this kind of thing. (NDO)

Other surprises included the commitment to the task of all the participants.

> I was pleasantly surprised by how hard we all worked and how we all slogged away at trying to get the document ready. The devotion of the RDG members was quite incredible. (NDO)

Great pleasure for some arose from different conditions of work:

> Up there we had time, uninterrupted thinking time, writing time, punctuated by meetings which were planned in advance so you knew exactly the time you had available. There were no interferences and no interruption, and all the tasks were of an intellectually stimulating nature, creating something or responding to someone else's creation. So, it was working at a level that you can't sustain in school because of the day to day interruptions. (Head teacher)

> The amount of drafting, redrafting and thought and planning that goes into some of these national documents was a surprise, and also the level of criticism, positive criticism. It took some time to get used to that because as a Head you have no chance to redraft. If you write a parents' letter, it's done. It has to go out because of the pressures of time. If you write a report for the region you might have a chance to redraft it once. (Head teacher)

> The difference between being a Head teacher and the leader of a (school) group and being a member of a team are, of course, quite dramatic, but one had to think that through. Becoming an effective team member meant shutting up sometimes and listening to the contributions of others.

Less satisfying surprises have already been reported in §4.7.2 but some also arose from a break from the structure of school timetables.

> I didn't know where I was going to be each day. It might be that I would be out in a school or in the college or in different tutorial rooms. I found that quite shattering. The organization wasn't a problem, because if you have organized a good classroom that is something that you are good at. I found unnerving always to be doing different things after I'd done the same things for so long.
>
> It was a very different way of spending your day and week. The college was really diary driven, whereas in school all kinds of things happen every day. (Head teacher)
>
> It was totally and absolutely, excruciatingly painful because there was no order to the job. There were no set times to do things. There was me and no-one else and there was no-one to talk to. There was no pattern. I had this tremendous guilt feeling because I would say, "It's half past ten and by play time I would have had x, y and z done". I would think, "What have I done, I have been thinking and I have got three words written". That I found a great difficulty, all just terrible difficulties, but that was from guilt, from having been regimented since 1959.

4.8 Stabilization

Having gone through the sometimes, though not always, temporary pains of adjustment the secondees began to stabilize.

4.8.1 A job that fits the person or a cause for complaint?

People feel that they can give all their talents, enthusiasm and effort to a new job when no longer spending anxious moments (even hours) in adapting to it. It is to employers' advantage for their new employees to stabilize soon, and to feel comfortable in the job.

We asked the secondees whether at the end of their secondment they felt that the job fitted them. Thirty responded "very well", 15 "well enough" and only three "not well" (one each from the SCCC, the Regions and the Colleges). Amongst the 30 feeling well suited was one who felt he took to the job "like a fish to water".

Amongst those feeling some discontent **during** their secondments were 20 who felt they needed to take action to improve the situation. Only one of these in fact did nothing, the others made serious protests in some cases and minor complaints in others. Six negotiated changes in their jobs. The three who made serious protests had, in fact, received very shabby treatment.

In order to cope with the uncertainties and dilemmas of secondment, and in some cases to organize protests, mutual support groups were formed by the secondees. Nearly three quarters were in jobs where it was possible to form such a group and all of them reported the value of this support.

4.8.2 The development and use of secondees' strengths

As we have already observed the secondees brought to their new posts many strengths of which they were proud. We were interested in whether these strengths had been recognized and fostered. Had the secondees gone on to develop their strengths as they had expected? Taking the matter a step further, and anticipating that their overall performance would have been enhanced by the experience of secondment, we asked whether they had been able to use these strengths in the new jobs to which they were appointed or the jobs to which a substantial number (22) returned.

In the table below we have taken the strengths mentioned by those we interviewed and split them into five sections: Management, Social skills, Expertise, Development skills and Academic skills.

Table 17: The Development and Use of Secondees' Strengths

Development and Use

Strengths	Brought to Secondment (n=50)		Developed in Secondment (n=50)		Used in new job (n=26)*		Used in job to which returned (n=22)	
	n	per cent	n	per cent	n	per cent	n	per cent
Organiz & Management	43	86	41	82	16	62	13	59
Social skills	46	92	43	86	21	81	14	64
Expertise								
Knowledge of schools	33	66	35	70	16	62	8	36
Knowledge of the wider system	12	24	46	92	16	62	9	41
Curriculum area	39	78	31	62	13	50	11	50
Contacts	13	26	44	88	13	50	9	41
Development skills								
Independence	39	78	40	80	17	65	11	50
Innovatory ideas	37	74	33	66	13	50	12	55
Project development	15	30	35	70	11	42	9	41
Academic skills								
Knowledge of theory	26	52	34	68	14	54	10	46
Writing	27	54	39	78	15	58	12	55
Clarity of thinking	27	54	42	84	18	69	13	59

* There were two secondees who returned temporarily to their pre-secondment jobs before being given a renewed secondment. They do not appear in either of the two final categories.

Most secondees considered that their management and social skills were strengths they brought to their secondments, but fewer laid claim to expertise and development skills, in particular to knowledge of project development. About half considered they brought academic skills to their secondments. When we move to the positive effects of secondment we find that some three quarters claim they have developed. This occurred particularly with respect to their increase in knowledge of

the wider system and an associated increase in contacts. A large number considered they had acquired new strengths in project development and in academic skills.

There must be disappointment in the observation that these strengths do not always appear to be called upon as secondees move into new jobs or return to their previous positions. Between a half and two thirds use their newly developed strengths in their new jobs and about a half use them in their previous posts. It would appear there is a significant waste of the increased capacities of this energetic group of professionals. This issue will be taken up again in the discussion of Exit.

4.9 The end of the secondment and exit

In this section we shall examine the secondees' plans for their future, the management of their departure, the posts to which they went, and the degree of satisfaction they felt if they returned to their previous posts. We supposed that short-term secondments would produce some uncertainty well before they were completed, and that secondees might have their minds on the future as much as the present.

4.9.1 Planning for the next job

For many secondees, particularly those who had seen their secondment as not only interesting in itself but as a path to an enhanced career, there was some pressure to plan for its end. They had gained in competence and experience and were ready to move to pastures new. We asked them whether they had inquired about further secondments or entirely different jobs and at what point this inquiry started. Thirty-seven made enquiries, 13 within a year, another 11 between 12 and 18 months and the remaining 13 in the last six months of their secondments. Since 9 had only had very short secondments we cannot be surprised that some of them had begun making enquiries early on. But the 13 were not only drawn from this group, and their early inquiries suggest a degree of concern amongst secondees that may make for insecurity rather than stabilization.

What did they apply for? Seven looked for further secondments, either in the same post or in new posts with the same employer. Another six applied for other jobs in the same position they had previously had (eg as head teachers in other schools) and 28 applied for jobs in different posts (eg as head teachers, college lecturers or advisers).

4.9.2 Exit posts

What actually happened to them? Twenty-two returned to their previous jobs and 28 moved on, seven of them to another secondment, and seven to new jobs entirely. Fourteen went to the same kind of job as that from which they had come, but for eight, this was accompanied by promotion. New jobs and promotions were into permanent posts in the colleges, into the inspectorate, into regional directorates and advisorates and into Head teacher and AHT positions.

Table 18: Types of exit post

Post	Totals* n	per cent
Return to previous post	22	44
Another employer		
With promotion	8	16
In same position	6	12
Another secondment	7	14
A new job entirely	7	14

* some responses were missing because secondments had not been completed.

It is worth noting here that secondments to colleges, however developmental for the individual, are not always the route to head teacher appointments, as this quotation illustrates:

> I applied for four head teachers' jobs and was leeted. Now, in every case, it was either a person who was already a head teacher in a small school or a person with acting head teacher's experience who got the job. (Following a phone call to the divisional education officer for feedback on the interviews) . . . It seemed that she was having to persuade people that I was a good candidate because they did not look on College as being something positive on your CV, because the parents, the School Board, were saying "This person has been out of the primary school for a year and a half. Why did you want to leave primary and go to the college?"

This secondee was advised to return to her previous school in order to give herself a better chance with subsequent applications.

4.9.3 The management of exit

We learned from our interviewed secondees that for many of them the end of the secondment had been a flawed affair, without purposeful consideration of their needs. Indeed, exit interviews as such, which contain a review of the experience and a guide to the employer on how to manage future employees as well as a graceful acknowledgment of hard work and commitment, were infrequent. Most SOED secondees, however, seem to have felt that they had been given time and attention. In fact one SOED secondee described a process of being considerately "filtered back" into school.

> A programme was arranged, with the depute director of the region, of going back to school, of one visit a week, then a couple, then a day in, a day out, two days back in - just to find out what was happening - let my face be seen by 120 children who had never seen me before. (Head teacher)

We put to the secondees possible exit experiences they might have had, and report the numbers with these experiences in Table 19.

Table 19: Experiences of the management of exit

Exit Experiences	SOED	SCCC	Regions	Colleges	Total n	Total per cent
Recognition of services	6	10	17*	7	40	80
Discussion of future with secondment manager	6	4*	13	3	26	52
Feedback on performance	5	5*	12	7	24	48
Debriefing	3	0	10	1	14	28
Discussion of future with pre-secondment manager	4	3	4	0	11	22

* On each of these items we had a number of missing responses since not all had finished their secondment.

Surprisingly not all of the secondees received thanks and recognition for their services. Some, however, had parties staged in their honour. Of more importance for their future was the time for the personal discussion to reflect on the secondment and to contemplate possibilities for the next stage in a career. Only about half had this experience. Debriefing, a procedure for the benefit of the employer, was infrequently used, and pre-secondment managers seem even more rarely to have invited their employees to discuss their futures. Very often, secondees felt, these officials had already made up their minds what was to become of their one-time employees (frequently a return to their former jobs) and did not consider discussion to be necessary. This emerges from a subsequent question which showed 12 secondees believing that their previous employers had the greatest influence in deciding their exit posts as opposed to themselves, their secondment employers or others.

Pressure was put on some of those who returned to their schools to return (if only part-time) for the beginning of a session. This created problems of its own.

> Well, it was difficult, I must admit. On two levels, because due to going in the three half days, I was given one class which was mine on the timetable, and the pressure had been really put on that if I didn't go back part time then this class wouldn't run. Also it was difficult going in and taking one period of somebody else's class because you can't build up a relationship with them, and it was like starting off again as a new teacher and battling with other people's difficulties . . . And I said I would appreciate if they could either tell me or leave me a note in advance of the class that I was going to have so that I knew what I'd have to do. And only one person did

that, and the other said, "Oh, I can't remember what I did with them the last day, just do such and such" as I was going in the door.

Other difficulties surrounding exit included the abruptness of the secondment conclusion at the end of 23 months which did not necessarily coincide with conclusion of a project. In the quotation below a secondee who went on to a renewed secondment speaks.

> It was totally inconvenient for the project, in that the second phase took off and the contracts were ready to sign, but I had to go back to school for a month. It was against the school's wishes (as it disrupted the timetable in the middle of the school year) and the person who was doing my job's wishes and it was unhelpful to everybody.

Another changeover problem occurred in a college (which has since instituted better exit management systems) in which payment by region and by the college was not well coordinated or communicated. The secondees were left disappointed and angry because of an expectation they would receive college rates of pay till the end of August (the beginning of the new school session) and in fact being, as they saw it, "cut off" at the end of June without being informed of the arrangement in advance. A number of secondees returned to old or new posts temporarily prior to moving to more permanent posts.

Exit was sometimes thoughtfully managed and at other times, cursorily concluded, leaving secondees bruised by the experience. There are obvious causes for concern at this point just as there are over induction. Remedies suggested by the secondees themselves as well as resulting from our own and others' research will be put forward in our last chapter.

4.10 Attachment and Detachment: Was it worthwhile?

We may seem to have painted a picture of disturbance and stress, and indeed this occurred, but the experience of secondment was overwhelmingly rewarding for all but three respondents, who would not choose to undergo it again. These two quotations capture the heady feeling most secondments produced.

> It was an exciting time to be at the leading edge, and not only was [the unit] at the leading edge as far as Scotland was concerned but, as we quickly found out, we were at the leading edge certainly with the UK.

> I enjoyed the stimulus of the new experience of the job in general, relating to a different population, a wider population, people with a lot of different views that they are exposed to and you can pick up. That is a very broadening experience and I began to realize just how isolated head teachers are in their own school.

Along with this goes a sense of personal change:

> If I look at myself professionally, I am much more confident. Whenever anyone says anything in a big meeting, I don't sit there and **think**, "Oh that's wrong." I will say - sing out loud. I know a lot about management. I know a lot about SOED. I know a lot about each region, so I can bring all these things together. And if anything comes in, immediately I know what is being talked about - England or Scotland or Northern Ireland.

These remarks capture some of the quality of development of strengths that was discussed in §4.8.

We summarize the review of the secondment experience in the table below.

Table 20: Reviewing Secondments

Review	SOED	SCCC	Regions	Colleges	Totals n	Totals per cent
I learned a lot	6	11	19	10	46	92
I enjoyed it	6	10	21	10	47	94
It was hard work	6	11	21	8	46	92
It changed how I see myself	5	10	19	5	39	78

This table clearly illustrates the great satisfaction that was obtained from a secondment. This was so widespread that there was little or no difference between the employers. The sense of challenges met and of visible personal and professional development remained with secondees whatever their subsequent careers and whatever the ups and downs of induction and exit.

This leads us on to the question of how those who returned to their former jobs adjusted to the move. We have shown that the attachment to the secondment was perceived in terms of a powerful gain: was this to lead to a serious sense of loss on detachment or were there possibilities for a renewed attachment to a previous position?

4.11 Detachment: Return to a former job

We wished to test whether the impression given by many of the interviewed secondees of disillusionment and depression on return to their schools had occurred by chance, and put to questionnaire respondents a range of possible responses, some of them positive and others negative. The respondents had to indicate whether they felt that the secondment had turned out to be "very much", "moderately" or "not at all" positive/negative with regard to particular statments. Their responses are analysed to indicate high and moderate levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These responses, and the interview responses reported later, allow us to consider whether detachment brought with it important losses, while being matched with (re)attachment gains and whether return was usually perceived to be disappointing, as our interviews had suggested.

Table 21: Positive and Negative outcomes of a return to former post

	Very much	Moderately	Not at all
Positive outcomes: attachment gains			
A welcome return to the known	0	19	5
An opportunity to explore new skills	5	10	12
A chance to initiate new developments	7	14	7
Negative outcomes: attachment losses			
A disappointment	5	12	9
A waste of newly developed skills	10	11	5
A return to a "used up" job	8	9	9
A problem due to being left behind by new developments	4	7	16

Taking all 79 responses together we received 12 (15 per cent) highly satisfied responses, 43 (54 per cent) moderately satisfied and 24 (30 per cent) dissatisfied responses to the "positive outcome" questions. The greatest source of dissatisfaction seemed to lie in the use of newly developed skills. This finding reinforces the observation, made in §4.8.2, that only about half of returning secondees now made use of the strengths acquired or developed during the secondment. We find this dissatisfaction over skill use shown again in the section of the table on "negative outcomes" where ten of the 22 returning secondees have responded strongly.

> I think that the most difficult thing was that the school did not recognise any of the experience which I had gained at all levels, neither the people under me nor the people above me. I did not feel that anything of what I had gained was used by anybody in school whatsoever. I had difficulty convincing people that I had learned a lot and knew what I was talking about (after being on a national working party etc etc).

Rather than paint too gloomy a picture we should also draw attention to the fact that there are a considerable number of respondents who **do** find an opportunity to use their strengths. This must be regarded as reducing attachment loss.

A reattachment gain for most of the returning secondees appears to lie in going back to the familiar environment of their schools, but responses are less than wholehearted, perhaps because schools are continually undergoing the stress of change but also because for some there seemed to be a deadening sameness.

> The main feeling I had when going back was of déjà vu, of stepping back two years in my life. An example I quote is of two particular members of staff who had been there a long time, and so when I walked into the staff room, they were in the same seats, and I thought, this could be two years ago. They had not moved, either mentally or physically in the last two years and they will never move. I felt that I had moved on; my attitudes, my experiences had moved on.

Taking together all responses on the negatively phrased statements (n=105) we are able to report that though 39 of them (37 per cent) indicated no distress, 66 (63 per cent) recorded a negative outcome. How was this experienced? The interviewed secondees speak of a range of problems, encapsulated in this observation.

> A secondment creates appetites which cannot be sustained when the work is finished

The problems included:

- Having changed when others had not (see quotation above)
- Having to adapt to changes in the organization from which they came
- Non-use of skills (reported above)
- Resentment of them by other staff
- Loss of flexibility and autonomy
- Loss of sense of involvement in the wider world
- Reduction in perceived value of previous job
- Sense of being deskilled through absence

Below we allow the secondees to speak for themselves, beginning with one who found return brought unanticipated difficulties:

> I wasn't bothered at all about going back to the original post, but some people in the school had the idea that when you are on secondment you are just swanning around the place and you are not actually doing anything much and it is just a wee holiday. "Wait until you come back into the real world and see how you get on then, see how you cope then". It was almost as if, "Right, we are going to make the worst possible experience for you".

It was not, after all, simply a return to where they had been before.

> No, it certainly wasn't like putting on an old glove. It was like putting on a new glove which had five fingers in it still, but the hand didn't fit. I found coming back here more difficult than going away. I think it is may be because two years is a long time.

There were some who reported curriculum changes launched in their schools while they had been occupied elsewhere which left them feeling stranded.

> I had missed out on two years of teaching Standard Grade and I was just about to start presenting for Standard Grade when I came out on secondment, and people were a bit wary of how I would cope (when I went back).

Others returned to a change of staff and a loss of administrative support:

> There was a new head of department, but it was different, felt different. I supposed it is just because the jobs were so different and there were some things you miss. For example, one of the things which I foolishly got used to was having superb secretarial support and now I've gone from having half a secretary to a thirtieth of a secretary.

In the case of some head teachers, there was a return to a school which had been much altered by their substitute. This was not always perceived as an advantage.

Many, though not all, reported disappointment on returning to their posts, and, as the head teacher interviewees stressed, this was often due to a feeling of being oppressed by "trivia" or "regimentation" after the stimulation of the secondment.

> There was a low period, which was a reaction - back to the day to day grind, the trivia, compared to the high level of working with people on the secondment, who are used to working at a high, intensive level but have no experience of mopping up the blood on the floor.

A senior secondee told us:

> By the end of my time I was the boss, and I am now back here having to get something ready by such and such a time, get this form in by that date, do this, do that. So it was a move in the opposite way, coming back and having to fit into this regimented business - like I can't keep the children for ten minutes after school because the buses are sitting out there.

Another Head teacher remarked:

> I was back to having to deal with the day to day hassle and what-not of school. Some of that I like, it was nice to go back and get contact with children, who were so welcoming. It was very nice and gratifying. I enjoyed that. The bit I didn't like, and really this is general pettiness, I didn't have the same tolerance of children as well as staff.

For Head teachers, then, the return was often marked by pleasure in being warmly received but dissatisfaction at a return to the daily round of what now seemed rather dreary and repetitive calls on their time. They and others sometimes found themselves deskilled yet again. This Head teacher found it hard.

> It's a major readjustment and it causes a lot of depression because you're having to relearn time management skills, prioritising roles and delegation, which before you'd been good at. You've lost them a bit and they have to be relearned.

These quotations pick up some but not all of the sometimes agonizing experiences of detachment and reattachment. In fact, reattachment had to be struggled for and was not easily won.

> On return change must have taken place, within oneself and the establishment to which one returns. It takes a great deal of time and space before the "settling down" attitude again becomes apparent. Nevertheless, this, in itself, is a challenge and is worthwhile living through.

We are glad to note that some made the transition back relatively easily but saddened by the very real pain of the experience of others, at its most acute when secondees had to return to a job from which they had been glad to escape. The sense of being left on the shelf, unrecognized and even spurned, was strong even amongst those who were consciously making the best of it. As researchers we were distressed by the despair we occasionally encountered and convinced that a change was needed.

In Chapter 6 we present some suggestions for change to support secondees not only going through an initial transition into the secondment, but, in the case of many of those who returned to their former posts, a second transition, which, this time, was felt to be diminishing.

We bring this chapter to a close on a more cheerful note by reminding readers that over half of the secondees moved, with their customary enthusiasm, to new posts (often with a similarly poor induction) or to further secondments. Furthermore, there were those who returned to new developments which swept them up into what they felt would be a bright future.

4.12 Returning to the theoretical frameworks

The experience of secondees was generally positive, with many reporting significant benefits and also highlighting a number of avoidable (and some unavoidable) problems.

Reviewing the data in the light of the two models mentioned earlier reveals that both models offer helpful frameworks for the consideration of secondment.

Applying the Kelly GLAD model

For Kelly's GLAD there are two job changes: into and out of the secondment. The terminology of attachment and detachment thus changes its meaning at the two ends of the secondment experience.

Moving into secondment usually has attachment gains of development in skills and in knowledge, and in stimulation from new colleagues. For some, there are detachment gains ie for those who feel they have had long enough in their present job, and wish to escape to another post. Detachment losses for some included loss in confidence, while attachment losses included pressure to fit the job and, for some, isolation which could be seen as either type of loss.

Leaving the secondment and returning to the previously held post is perceived as an attachment gain by some and a detachment loss by others. For some too, the post secondment era is an opportunity to explore new knowledge and skills (attachment gain), while for others new skills are wasted since opportunities for their use do not exist (detachment loss). Gains are more apparent for those who move to new jobs.

It would seem that in both the early induction and the later exit phases of secondment a GLAD model for analysis might be of assistance to reflection on the secondment experience and for career development discussions.

Nicholson's transition model

With respect to secondment, Nicholson's model of transition with its emphasis on preparation highlights the post appointment period as a time for rounding off old commitments and planning ahead. For preparation and encounter, there are clear areas which induction programmes could address, for example, role clarification, and information on administrative systems.

Adjustment is seen to vary partly with type of secondment, with those in Colleges (and to an extent Regions) being more likely to encounter pressures to fit the job. Such differences perhaps suggest that the use of secondment posts varies. Some posts may be ideally suited to secondment and development posts may be one example. Creating secondments to fill relatively permanent staffing gaps is a quite different strategy. Such differences in strategy may require different management of seconded staff. Established posts may be best supported by effective formal induction, while development tasks may be best supported by mentoring. Both may be assisted by team membership. Regardless of strategy, identification of training needs is clearly important.

Full stabilisation is problematical for a secondee. For Nicholson stabilisation involves looking ahead within a job, identifying staff development opportunities and future career moves. But a considerable number of two year secondees take over six months to feel settled in, and for many it is not long until they begin to think about their exit post. This thinking ahead however does not appear to be spurred on by a sense of stability in the present job but rather by necessity, by a consciousness of a time limited post. For the secondee there is an expectation of discontinuity in work. For some this may be stimulating in itself. For others however, especially for those who wished to escape their pre-secondment post, the awareness of impending return is unlikely to enhance feelings of stability.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- **Secondees' reputation**

Although the majority of secondment posts are now advertised, we found that almost all secondees were known to the new employers as being highly competent in their field. (§4.3.1)

- **Secondees' prior interest**

A majority of the secondees studied in this project were already keenly interested in the kind of work the new post seemed to offer. (§4.3.2, §4.4.1)

- **Expectations and motivations**

Motivating expectations were personal and professional development, a desire for change and career opportunities. The desire for change was strong. (§4.3.2, §4.4.1)

- **Motivations**

Secondees' responses to the offer of secondment proved to be mainly the prospect of interesting new work, gains in experience and the hope of being able to work with a wide range of people. Career enhancement seemed of importance to only one third of the sample. (§4.4.1)

- **Employers' responses**

  A large majority of the secondees found that their employers were supportive when they learned about the secondment offer. A significant number, however, found that their appointment induced anxiety and little encouragement from immediate superiors. (§4.4.2)

- **Secondment planning - handover**

  Because of their experience prior to leaving the pre-secondment post, some secondees felt that the planning of their secondment was muddled. Muddle occurred both at the handover stage in their pre-secondment job and when they entered the secondment. (§4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.3)

- **Preparation**

  In keeping with their high level of professionalism, many secondees successfully prepared themselves for the transfer to a new post; some, however, did not have the information nor the time necessary to use their period of notice constructively. (§4.5.2)

- **Induction**

  Most secondees expected induction, but many did not have their expectations fulfilled. The greatest gap between expectation and actual experience occurred in relation to formal induction. Nearly all secondees expected pre-secondment briefing but nearly half of them did not receive any. Very few expected formal training, and very few received it. (§4.5.3)

- The colleges of education emerged from our research as the least successful of the employing agencies in the provision of induction which satisfied the secondees' expectations. The other employing agencies sometimes provided mentoring arrangements and regular briefings. (§4.5.3)

- Very few of the secondees we interviewed were satisfied that they had been given adequate information about the new job, its nature, demands and conditions of service. This led to secondees being unexpectedly faced with demands for which they could not be prepared. (§4.5.3)

- **Expectations and experiences**

  An extension of knowledge and expertise was fairly widely expected by secondees, in particular a knowledge of the wider Scottish or regional education system. In most cases this was satisfied by subsequent experience. Intellectual challenge was expected, and frequently experienced.

- **Problems of isolation**

  A majority of the secondees expected to find teamwork a prominent feature in their new job. Alarmingly, however, a significant number of the secondees experienced isolation. This should cause employers to think carefully about how work is structured for secondees, since a feeling of isolation, combined with the absence of regular briefing and mentoring, will prevent secondees settling in and adjusting in sufficient time to benefit themselves and their employers. (§4.6.2)

- **Line management and autonomy**

  Over 80% of the secondees expected to have considerable autonomy in their new post. Between half and two-thirds of them anticipated clear line management responsibility and well defined tasks. In the event, far fewer found either. (§4.6.3)

- **Settling in - time taken**

  Many secondees reported that they settled in to their new work within a month. This was less frequent in regional or college employment. Indeed, in the regions and in the colleges there were secondees still struggling to settle in more than six months after appointment. (§4.7.1)

- **Settling in - problems**

  The salient difficulties encountered with respect to settling in and adjusting were as follows: problems presented by the administrative arrangements; doubts as to the nature of the job; problems of project planning and the degree of responsibility carried; and, in the case of college employment, getting to grips with the curriculum and learning how to teach adults. (§4.7.2)

Settling in - satisfaction

- In general the secondments seemed to have provided most people with a reasonable degree of latitude to use their expertise, to shape the job as they thought best, to acquire a feeling of ownership, and to work in accordance with their values. However, secondment can often be accompanied, initially in most cases, by feelings of loneliness and fears of inadequacy. (§4.7.3)

- **Transitional surprises**

  Two thirds of the secondees experienced 'transitional surprise', both positive and negative. Among pleasant surprises reported were the discovery that secondees had stepped outside the usual status hierarchy and were able to enjoy colleagueship with highly committed professionals, and the enjoyment of new conditions of work in which the individual was largely autonomous. Less satisfying surprises included a lack of certainty and predictability in the work and a consequent feeling of insecurity. (§4.7.5)

- **Stabilization**

  It is when people feel that they can give all their talents, enthusiasm and effort to a new job, and no longer spend periods of anxiety in adapting to it that they begin to stabilize. It is to the advantage of employers that new employees, especially short-term employees, should begin to stabilize soon. Of the secondees we studied, 30 seem to have stabilized well, 15 'well enough', and only a few did not adapt satisfactorily. (§4.8.1)

- **Mutual support groups**

  In order to cope with their difficulties, most of the secondees were able to form mutual support groups. All of these reported the value of this support. (§4.8.1)

- **Development of strengths**

  We were interested in whether the strengths brought by secondees to their new posts were recognized and developed. We found that some three quarters of the

number believed that they had brought strengths which were developed. This occurred particularly with respect to their increase in knowledge of the wider system and an associated increase in contacts. A large number considered that they had acquired new or added strengths in project development and in academic skills. (§4.8.2)

- **Waste of strengths in subsequent post**

It would appear that there is significant waste of these strengths when secondees return to their previous posts. Between a half and two thirds of the number we studied used their newly developed strengths in their new jobs and about a half used them in pre-secondment posts. (§4.8.2, §4.10.1)

- **Exit planning and new posts**

Most secondees felt some pressure to plan for their exit from secondment, a significant number beginning to make inquiries within the first year of secondment. The relatively short period of the secondment appeared therefore to have a destabilizing effect. New jobs and promotions were into permanent posts in the colleges, into the inspectorate, into regional advisorates and directorates and into HT and AHT positions. It is clear, therefore, that for the majority of the secondees the experience eventuated in a definite change in their careers. (§4.9.2)

- **Exit management**

For many secondees the ending of their secondment was mismanaged or allowed to proceed without purposeful consideration of their needs. Those seconded to the SOED were exceptions, having been given time and attention during the exit process. Only about half the total number were accorded attention and time for discussion of their experience and their future. Debriefing was infrequent in the secondment post, even more rare at the post-secondment stage. In some cases their exit was soured by mismanagement of arrangements in respect of pay, transfer and new contracts. (§4.9.3)

- **Satisfaction in secondment**

Despite the many difficulties they encountered, the great majority of the secondees felt great satisfaction in their secondment experience. This was so widespread that there was little or no difference among employers. The sense of challenges met and of visible personal and professional development remained with secondees whatever their subsequent careers. (§4.10)

In summary

This has been a report of secondees' experiences, but has led to a considerable questioning of administrative arrangements made for the period of appointment and preparation, for induction into the new job, for support in it and specifically for exit. This was widely regarded as unsatisfactorily managed both by the secondment agency and by the employers to which a significant number of secondees returned. Lack of recognition and esteem for secondees was a serious problem if they returned to their previous jobs and for some within their secondments. However, secondees report that their experiences were richly rewarding despite advice to others following in their footsteps to approach the experience with caution.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- We suggest that our findings and **conclusions be circulated** to all potential employers of persons on secondment or short-term contracts of employment.

- There might also be seminars to give **guidance to appropriate senior staff** of SOED, SCCC, EAs, colleges and other potential employers of persons on secondment, at which our report could form the basis of discussion.

- Careful consideration should be given to **selection procedures** in order that those appointed approach the new post with confidence.

- A clear **job specification** for each secondee should be prepared and made available to both line managers and potential secondees. This should involve line management responsibilities and work load.

- Prospective secondees should have a **sufficient period of notice** to allow them to hand over and prepare thoroughly for the new job.

- Since secondees experience a number of professional anxieties, **guidelines** should be drawn up to help them.

- Each employer should arrange a suitable form of **induction** for all secondees: this should begin before the commencement of the secondment.

- Induction arrangements should include the **assignment of a 'mentor'** who would be the secondee's first-instance adviser.

- During secondees' early adjustment period they should be encouraged to join or form **mutual support groups**, which should be free to represent their points of view to management.

- **Team work** should be consciously promoted to include new secondees.

- Where not otherwise designed, **a particular project** which the secondee may conclude in the period of the secondment should be negotiated to provide closure and satisfaction.

- **Exit should be planned** by (i) the secondee, (ii) the line manager, (iii) the former and secondary employer.

- Responsibility should be assigned to appropriate **managers to seek secondees' views** and advice before they leave their secondments. Recognition of services should be included.

- **The skills and strengths** developed by secondees during their secondment **should be recognised** by employers so that they can carry forward to their next job the benefits gained both for the individual and for the organization. This may be accomplished by an induction interview in the new job or a return interview by relevant managers conducted by eg Headteachers, Principal Teachers, EOs. Appropriate and continued use of the secondees' talents should be planned.

- **Individual or group counselling** for returners should be available.

- The research reported here has thrown up a number of questions relating to the needs, experiences and professional potential of persons who undertake short-term contracts of employment, and we propose that a wider study be undertaken which

would include reports on current approaches to the management of short-term employees.

REFERENCES

GATHERER, W & EDWARDS L (1988) **Academic Staff Secondment and Exchange** SCRE

HAYES J & NUTMAN P (1981) **Understanding the Unemployed** London,Tavistock

HOPSON B (1984) **Transition into work.** In Cooper C and Makin P (eds) **Psychology for Managers** London, BPS/Macmillan

KELLY G (1980) **A Study of the Manager's Orientation Towards the Transition from Work to Retirement**. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds

LOUIS M R, POSNER B Z & POWELL G N (1983) **The Availability and Helpfulness of Socialisation Practices.** Personnel Psychology 36, 857-866

NICHOLSON N (1984) **A Theory of Work Role Transitions.** Administrative Science Quarterly 29, 172-191

NICHOLSON N & WEST M (1988) **Managerial Job Change: Men and Women in Transition.** Cambridge University Press

Van MAANEN J & SCHEIN E (1979) **Towards a theory of Organisational Socialisation**. In Staw, B M (ed) **Research in Organisational Behaviour** Vol 1 Greenwich, JAI Press

SHORT-TERM SECONDMENTS

Interview Schedule

A Preparation

1 What were your expectations when you applied for the secondment?

2 How did you come to think about going for the job? (were you asked?)

a) personal
b) professional.

3 How did you feel when you were offered the secondment?

4 How did your current employer feel about the secondment and what did they do about it?

5 How much notice did you have?

a) how did that affect you?
b) what did you do with the time?

6 How much did you know about the work when you began?

7 What sort of expectations did you have

a) career?
b) personal?
c) professional?

8 What did you feel about the selection and appointment procedures?

B Induction

1 What information or help did you get from your new employer? Did you get anything on paper before you began?

2 What happened in your first weeks?

3 Was anyone identified to look after you?

4 Was there anyone who specially helped you?

5 How different was the job from the job you had just left personally and professionally? - sense of disjunction?

6 What did you find surprising?

7 Tell me how the work developed (shifting sands).

8 Were your strengths (by that we mean your particular skills and experiences) employed immediately or later or not at all?

9 How much did you feel you had to adapt to fit the job?

10 Was your previous job a guide/help?

11 Did you feel you had to take positive action to develop the job to fit in with what you wanted to do? Were you able or enabled to do so?

C Exiting

1 Did you start to think about what you would do when the secondment ended? When? Was it a serious source of concern?

2 What kind of worries were most prominent?

3 How did you think your career was going to be affected?

4 Was your next change of job discussed during your secondment. With whom?

5 Was your exit managed in any way and by whom?

D Post-Secondment

1 What problems did you experience immediately on changing your job?

- were these overcome?
- if so, how?

2 Did your view of yourself (especially of your strengths and weaknesses) change as a result of your secondment experience?

- how did it change?

3 How did your secondment experience affect your post - the job you went in to/back to?

4 How do you feel about it all, on reflection (link with long term development and career)?

SHORT-TERM SECONDMENTS

A Personal Details — For Office Use

1 **Sex** Male ☐ (1) Female ☐ (2)

2 **Age** 21-30 ☐ (1) 31-40 ☐ (2) 41-50 ☐ (3) over 50 ☐ (4) — 5

3 **Sector occupied before your secondment**

Nursery ☐ (1) Primary ☐ (2) Secondary ☐ (3) — 7

SEN ☐ (4)

Further Education ☐ (5) Polytechnic ☐ (6) University ☐ (7)

College of Education ☐ (8)

Post in School — 8

HT ☐ (1) DHT ☐ (2) AHT ☐ (3) PT ☐ (4)

ST ☐ (5) AT ☐ (6) APT ☐

Further and Higher Education

Researcher ☐ (1) Lecturer ☐ (2) Senior Lecturer ☐ (3) — 9

Head of Department ☐ (4)

4 **Organisation to which you were seconded**

SOED (include CAST) 1 ☐ SCCC 2 ☐ Region 3 ☐ 10

College 4 ☐ University 5 ☐ Other 6 ☐

5 **If you were seconded to college, was it:**

Jordanhill ☐ Moray House ☐ St Andrews ☐ 11

6 **If you were seconded to a region, was it**

Borders 1 ☐ Central 2 ☐ Lothian 3 ☐ Strathclyde 4 ☐ 12

Fife 5 ☐

7 **Length of secondment**

6 months 1 ☐ 7-12 months 2 ☐ 13-23 months 3 ☐ 13

24-36 months ☐ 37 months to 5 years ☐

B First Steps

1	Did you apply for an advertised position?	Yes	1 ☐	No	2 ☐	14
2	If so, was it suggested that you apply?	Yes	1 ☐	No	2 ☐	15
3	Were you approached to take the job rather than having to apply?	Yes	1 ☐	No	2 ☐	16
4	When you were appointed did you hope					
(a)	to return to your previous post?	Yes	1 ☐	No	2 ☐	17
(b)	to return to a similar post?	Yes	☐	No	☐	18
(c)	to move to a different post?	Yes	☐	No	☐	19

5 **If you applied, how did you come to think of going for the job:**
(Tick as many of the items as applied to you)

			Yes 1	No 2	
(a)	felt had long enough in present job	a	☐	☐	20
(b)	wanted to escape from present job	b	☐	☐	21
(c)	wanted a change	c	☐	☐	22
(d)	thought the job would offer particular career opportunities	d	☐	☐	23
(e)	thought the job would make use of strengths	e	☐	☐	24
(f)	thought the job would give opportunities for professional development	f	☐	☐	25

C The secondment is offered

1 **Thoughts on being offered the secondment**. Please tick the **THREE** items below which you felt most strongly applied to you.

1	Opportunity to meet wider range of people than in present job.	☐	26
2	Glad about security (eg, 23 months and then return).	☐	27
3	Career possibilities.	☐	28
4	Gain in experience.	☐	29
5	Interested in the subject/type of work.	☐	30
6	Realization of an ambition.	☐	31

2 **Professional anxieties on leaving your post.** Please tick which of the following apply.

1 Were you satisfied that you had left your responsibilities in good hands?

		1		2	
	Yes	☐	No	☐	32

2 If you were not satisfied, which of the following were of concern to you

(a)	curriculum.	☐	33
(b)	relationships within the organization/school	☐	34
(c)	community relationships.	☐	35
(d)	administration.	☐	36

3 Did the arrangements for your departure seem well planned?

		1		2	
	Yes	☐	No	☐	37

4 If there were difficulties were they:

			1		2	
(a)	last minute arrangements for substitute	Yes	☐	No	☐	38
(b)	no time to hand over	Yes	☐	No	☐	39
(c)	other	Yes	☐	No	☐	40

please specify . . . . . .

3 **Personal Feelings**

Please indicate where you would place yourself on this four point scale by ringing the appropriate numbers.

When you heard you were to take up the post how much did you feel:

	A lot	A little	Not at all	Not Applicable	
Pleasure at the compliment?	1	2	3	4	41
Anxiety about being up to the job?	1	2	3	4	42
Surprise at being chosen?	1	2	3	4	43
Satisfaction over recognition of previous work?	1	2	3	4	44
Relief at leaving previous job?	1	2	3	4	45

4 Employer's Response

Please could you place a tick in all those boxes which represent your employer's reponse.

General encouragement and support for your secondment.	☐	46
Realization that the appointment would be a positive advantage to them because of your increase in professional expertise.	☐	47
Surprise you were selected.	☐	48
Anxiety about your possible failure to return.	☐	49
Personal concern for your future.	☐	50
Worry that your replacement would not be satisfa[illegible]ry.	☐	51

Was there a difference between the reaction of your immediate superior (eg Head Teacher) and your overall employer (eg Local Authority)?

	1		2	
Yes	☐	No	☐	52

5 Expectations and Practice

People have said that they expected some or all of the procedures and experiences outlined below.

Which did you **expect** when you accepted the post and which did you actually get? Please place a tick in the boxes as appropriate.

Procedures		**Expected**	**Experienced**	
(a) A pre-secondment briefing	(a)			53, 54
(b) An information pack	(b)			55, 56
(c) Some formal induction	(c)			57, 58
(d) Regular briefing meetings	(d)			59, 60
(e) Someone assigned to look after your (a mentor)	(e)			61, 62
(f) training for new job	(f)			63, 64

Experiences		Expected	Experienced	
(a) Extra hard work	(a)			5, 6
(b) People generally more expert than yourself	(b)			7, 8
(c) Learn about the wider system (college, region, Scotland as a whole	(c)			9, 10
(d) A greater intellectual/ administrative challenge than in the job you were in	(d)			11, 12
(e) Demands for you to work autonomously/on your own	(e)			13, 14
(f) Heavy responsibility	(f)			15, 16
(g) Well defined tasks	(g)			17, 18
(h) Stimulation from new colleagues	(h)			19, 20
(i) Isolation	(i)			21, 22
(j) Clear line management responsibility	(j)			23, 24
(k) Team work	(k)			25, 26
(l) Time for scholarship	(l)			27, 28
(m) Opportunity for research	(m)			29, 30

D From One Job to the Next

1 How much notice did you have before taking up your new post?

up to 1 week ☐ 1 | 2 - 6 weeks ☐ 2 | 6 weeks or more ☐ 3

2 What did you do during the interim period? Please tick those statements that apply.

With regard to your position prior to Secondment

(a)	Handed over formally - records, duties, etc	(a)		32
(b)	Used a shadowing system to teach successor	(b)		33
(c)	Left without formal handover	(c)		34
(d)	Began to lose interest in your existing job	(d)		35
(e)	Other	(e)		36

With regard to Secondment

(a)	Pondered over the meaning of the job description	(a)		37
(b)	Visited relevant people to gain background information	(b)		38
(c)	Thought about the issues	(c)		39
(d)	Read in the area	(d)		40
(e)	Planned what you would do in the job	(e)		41
(f)	Prepared materials for the job	(f)		42
(g)	Had no time to consider future, too busy preparing for hand over	(g)		43
(h)	Other, please specify			

. . . . . .

3 **Once you were in the new job, did you keep in touch with your previous job?**

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 44

If you did keep in touch, over what sorts of matter? . . . . . .
. . . . . .

For how long

1-2 month ☐ 1 3-6 months ☐ 2 over 6 months ☐ 3 45

E Settling-In Period

1 How long did you take to settle in to the new job?

1 month ☐ 1 2 months ☐ 2 3 months ☐ 3 3-6 months ☐ 4 over 6 months ☐ 5 46

2 Please take the following aspects of "settling in" on a scale of 1 to 5
(1 - caused least difficulty, 5 - caused most difficulty, 0 = not applicable)

Finding out the nature of the job ☐ 47

Learning the administrative system ☐ 48

Getting to grips with the curriculum (College) ☐ 49

Planning project(s) ☐ 50

3 I was more surprised by:

(a) the difference between my previous job and the secondment
or
(b) the difference between what I expected the secondment to be like and how it actually was.

More surprised by

(a) ☐ OR (b) ☐ 51

4 Whole vs Part time in Secondment

Did you, at any time in your secondment spend regular periods in your previous job by arrangement with your new employer?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 52

For how many days a week? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 53

	Beginning	Through -out	End	
Near the beginning or near the end or throughout?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	54

Were there any difficulties with this arrangement?

	Yes ☐ 1	No ☐ 2		55

F Experience of Secondment

1 Here are some of the things secondees told us about their experiences. How much were they true for you? Please ring as appropriate.

	Most of the Time	Often	Some-times	Never	
You felt one of a team	1	2	3	4	56
You were unaware of the real job requirements	1	2	3	4	57
There was pressure to fit the job as it stood	1	2	3	4	58
There was scope for shaping/ developing the job	1	2	3	4	59
The demands were unreasonable	1	2	3	4	60
The job made use of your expertise	1	2	3	4	61
You had lost confidence	1	2	3	4	62
You were working alone	1	2	3	4	63
You had little impact	1	2	3	4	64
You had a sense of ownership	1	2	3	4	65
You were used "as a work horse"	1	2	3	4	66
The demands were congruent with your values	1	2	3	4	67

2 Your strengths, their development and use

Secondees report new demands were made on them. Here we list the strengths secondees report and ask you to indicate which you brought to the job and which you developed in the job by placing ticks in the boxes. You may, of course have not brought a strength to the job but also developed within the job.

		Strengths Brought to the job	Developed in job	
(a) working with people (social skills)	(a)			5, 6
(b) familiarity with schools	(b)			7, 8
(c) familiarity with wider educational system	(c)			9, 10
(d) expertise in a curricular area	(d)			11, 12
(e) theoretical background	(e)			13, 14
(f) organization and management skills	(f)			15, 16
(g) capacity for independent work	(g)			17, 18
(h) innovatory ideas	(h)			19, 20
(i) skill in project development	(i)			21, 22
(j) extensive contacts	(j)			23, 24
(k) writing ability	(k)			25, 26
(l) clarity of thinking	(l)			27, 28
(m) Others, please specify	(m)			29, 30

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

3 Use of Strengths

Were the strengths you built up during your secondment used if you went on to a new job **or** if you returned to your pre-secondment job? Please tick as appropriate.

Use of Strengths Developed in Secondment		Strengths Used In New Job	Pre-Secondment Job	
(a) working with people (social skills)	(a)			31, 32
(b) familiarity with schools	(b)			33, 34
(c) familiarity with wider educational system	(c)			35, 36
(d) expertise in a curricular area	(d)			37, 38
(e) theoretical background	(e)			39, 40
(f) organization and management skills	(f)			41, 42
(g) capacity for independent work	(g)			43, 44
(h) innovatory ideas	(h)			45, 46
(i) skill in project development	(i)			47, 48
(j) extensive contacts	(j)			49, 50
(k) writing ability	(k)			51, 52
(l) clarity of thinking	(l)			53, 54
(m) Others, please specify	(m)			55, 56

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

4 By the end of your secondment, did you feel that the job fitted you?

Very well ☐ 1 well enough ☐ 2 not well ☐ 3 57

Did you feel you needed to take action at any time to make it more comfortable for you? Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 58

If you answered yes to the previous question, which of these steps did you take?

Serious Protest	Minor Complaint	No Action	
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	59

5 Were there other secondees in your work place?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 60

If there were, did they act as a mutual support group?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 NA ☐ 3 61

How valuable was this?

Very ☐ 1 Moderately ☐ 2 Not at all ☐ 3 NA ☐ 4 62

G End of Secondment

1 Was your departure "managed" in any of these ways? Please tick all of the responses which applied to your.

Discussion with your second manager about your future — Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 5

Discussion with your pre-secondment employer about your future — Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 6

Debriefing with secondment manager about your experiences — Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2 7

1 2

Feedback on your performance Yes ☐ No ☐ 8

Recognition of and thanks for your services Yes ☐ (1) No ☐ (2) 9

2 Who did you feel had most influence over deciding your exit post?

Your secondment employer ☐
Your previous employer ☐
Yourself ☐
Other (please specify) ☐ 10

3 During your secondment, did you inquire about or apply for

	Inquired	Applied	
Another secondment in the same post?	☐	☐	11, 12
A new secondment with the same employer?	☐	☐	13, 14
Another job - same position?	☐	☐	15, 16
different position?	☐	☐	17, 18

At what point in your secondment did you begin making inquiries

In 1st year ☐ (1) After 12-18 months ☐ (2) In last 6 months ☐ (3) 19

4 Did you return to your previous job?

Temporarily ☐ (1) Permanently ☐ (2) Not at all ☐ (3) 20

If you moved was it to

(a) Another school/Coll/Employer

(i) with promotion? ☐ 21

(ii) in same position? ☐

(b) Another secondment

(i) to continue working in same job? ☐

(ii) to begin another job? ☐

(c) A new job entirely? ☐

If so, what . . . . . .

5 If you returned to the job in which you had been before the secondment, did this turn out to be

		Very Definitely	Moderately	Not at all	
(a)	A welcome return to the known?	1	2	3	22
(b)	A disappointment?	1	2	3	23
(c)	A waste of your newly developed skills?	1	2	3	24
(d)	A return to a job you had already "used up"?	1	2	3	25
(e)	An opportunity to explore your new skills?	1	2	3	26
(f)	A chance to initiate new developments?	1	2	3	27
(g)	A problem because you had been left behind by new developments	1	2	3	28

H Reviewing the secondment experience

1 How long do you feel a secondment should last?

	1		2		3	
6 months	☐	7-12 months	☐	13-23 months	☐	33
	4		5			
3 years	☐	4-5 years	☐			

2 Looking back over your secondment how do you feel about it:

I feel I learned a lot:	Yes ☐	No ☐		29
I enjoyed it	Yes ☐	No ☐		30
It was hard work	Yes ☐	No ☐		31
I see myself differently in consequence	Yes ☐	No ☐		32

Other . . . . . .

. . . . . .

3 Reviewing your secondment experience

If you had known then what you know now, would you have accepted the secondment? Yes ☐ No ☐

What advice would you offer to a friend who is contemplating applying for/accepting a secondment?

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Thank you for your help.